

Perishment Under Socialism by Ralph Winn

NEW MASSES

APRIL 5, 1938

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

Standard Oil vs. Mexico

A Report from Tampico

By Marc Frank



A Long-Term Policy

Collective Action or Isolation: Which Is the Path to Peace?

THE SIXTH ARTICLE IN A SERIES

By Earl Browder

Who Is the Little Business Man? by A. B. Magil

They Won in Puerto Rico by E. M. Ellsworth

A Life and Death Struggle by Robert Forsythe

FROM OUR READERS

READERS WHO HAVE responded to our appeal for help have the floor. They have a message for other readers of the NEW MASSES. And they say it's urgent.

From J. R., Philadelphia:

"I'm fortunate—I have a job. But there are millions in America who have no jobs. The NEW MASSES fights for a society in which there will be jobs for all. Surely, we who have jobs can't let the NEW MASSES down! Enclosed is two dollars."

From Charles Jaffe, New York:

"I'm almost flat, but it's better that I should be than the NEW MASSES. Sorry it's only a buck."

From Marion, S. M., San Francisco, comes the following:

"The combination of Browder, Kunitz, and the inimitable Forsythe did it. Here's my dollar. But don't spend three cents of it thanking me for going bankrupt. With best wishes."

From a farmer, John C., of Chatsworth, Cal.:

"Enclosed find two dollars to help your wonderful magazine. I only wish I could do more. Will send some more this summer when I sell my crops if I have any to speak of or get anything for them. This magazine must not go out of existence. It is needed very much, and I for one would be lost without it."

And this is for Mike Gold, a reply to his appeal published in the March 22 issue:

"Dear Comrade Mike: In answer to your appeal, I am forwarding five dollars for the NEW MASSES. I am a needle trades worker, and so it is quite difficult for me to play the role of an

angel for the NEW MASSES. However, the loss of the NEW MASSES would indeed be a calamity. For me it would be a loss, for in these nasty times of treachery, stupidity, and cruelty, every fresh number of the NEW MASSES is like a tonic. More power to you and to the NEW MASSES, and more dollar give-until-it-hurts contributions."—S. V.

From Nice, France, Ruth M. P. writes:

"Because we think it would be a calamity for the NEW MASSES to go under, my husband and I again send the small sum of five dollars to help make up your fund."

From Robert M. Coates:

"Merely for the sake of free expression and enlightenment in America, it would be an irreparable loss if the NEW MASSES were to be forced to suspend publication. Here, with heartiest good wishes for the success of your campaign, is a small contribution (five dollars)."

But why go on? You know what the NEW MASSES means to you and to thousands more like you. We need \$20,000 to save the NEW MASSES and keep it going for the future. That is *your* future as well as ours, for the NEW MASSES is not a private venture, but belongs to the whole labor and progressive movement. So far \$11,239.09 has been received, which means that the NEW MASSES is still not out of danger. Every one of the above letters—and we have quoted only a few of the many that have come in—is an S.O.S. to *you* to speed your contribution today. Send it by wire or air mail to 31 E. 27th Street, New York City.

INCLUDED in next week's monthly literary section are:

Strangers of the Thunder, by Carl Carmer; *Bread Upon the Waters*, by Michael Bruen; *Revolution in Bohemia*, by Granville Hicks; *Words I Did Not Speak*, by Edward G. Wall, and *The Heroes*, by William Rose Benét.

The box holders at our annual Spring Ball (Friday evening, April 1) will include: Robert Benchley, Art Young, William Gropper, Isamu Noguchi, Marc Blitzstein, Kurt Weill, Harold J. Rome, Morris Carnovsky, Frances Farmer, Hanns Eisler, Luther Adler, Jules Garfield, Hester Sondergaard, Emanuel Eisenberg, Robert Forsythe, Clifford Odets, Ernst Toller, George Seldes, Muriel Draper, and Thomas Wolfe.

The series of articles by Earl Browder on *Concerted Action or Isolation: Which Is the Path to Peace?* concluded in this issue, will be published immediately as a pamphlet by Workers' Library Publishers.

The new Soviet film, *Lenin in October*, reviewed in our last week's issue, opened on March 31 at the Cameo Theater.

Next Wednesday, April 6, Joshua Kunitz will open the NEW MASSES lectures series with a talk on the recent Soviet trials, "Why Do They Confess?" The meeting will be held at The Roger Smith, 40 East 41st Street, New York City. Tickets are \$1.50 for the entire series of six lectures, thirty-five cents for a single admission. On the following Wednesday, A. B. Magil will talk on "How Can America Keep Out of War?" The last four lectures on contemporary subjects will be given

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Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification direct to us rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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by Bruce Minton, Theodore Draper, Granville Hicks, and Marguerite Young, in that order.

Who's Who

MARC FRANK is Mexican correspondent for the NEW MASSES. . . . A. B. Magil, a member of the NEW MASSES staff, is co-author of the forthcoming *Fascism: Made in U. S. A.* to be issued by International Publishers. . . . Ralph Winn is a member of the philosophy Department at C. C. N. Y. He translated Mikhail Lifshitz's *Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, issued by the Critics' Group. . . . Samuel Putnam translated parts of *The Pasquier Chronicles* for earlier publication.

Flashbacks

"**T**HE confederacy seems to be at an end," wrote Marx to Engels early in the spring of 1865, and little more than a month later (April 9, 1865), Lee, the military tactician of the slave-owners' counter-revolution, surrendered at Appomatox. . . . The largest and most stable organization of the unemployed in the world's history dates its unity from April 7, 1936. In Washington, D. C. that day the Unemployment Councils, with six years of continuous history, and the Unemployed Leagues merged into the existing Workers' Alliance. . . . "We are about to put the dollar sign on the American flag," lamented Senator Norris (echoing the protests of militant labor) when President Wilson was preparing to sign the declaration of war against Germany, April 6, 1917.

NEW MASSES

A P R I L 5, 1 9 3 8



A. Aiaz

Standard Oil vs. Mexico

By Marc Frank

TAMPICO, MEXICO.

ON March 18, the sixty-seventh anniversary of the day on which the Paris workers "stormed Heaven," as Marx put it, and set up the Paris Commune, the Mexican government, urged by the Federation of Mexican Workers, expropriated the billion-dollar British and American oil industry. Five days later, nearly a quarter of a million men and women marched through the streets of Mexico City in a huge demonstration of support for President Cárdenas! It was the biggest popular demonstration there since Francisco Madero came riding on an earthquake to start the national revolution which Cárdenas is carrying one stage further. All over the country, in the smallest villages, Mexicans marched to support the President. As in the Paris of 1871, all classes rallied at the cry: "The country is in danger." But unlike France, it was the first time that Mexicans all over the country had ever rallied to that cry.

Probably only the President's closest advisers and those around Lombardo Toledano, secretary of the Mexican Workers' Federation (C.T.M.), know exactly how far that cry was justified. Cárdenas has more than once spoken of the oil companies' "interference in Mexican politics," and he made no suggestion that he was speaking merely of the past. The country was in danger that weekend, and this was the reason for the suddenness of the move.

There came no Pancho Villas riding. No Huertas, with American ministers to back their treacherous plots for the murder of a Madero. Today's threat to Mexican sover-

eighty is more insidious, more perilous; waged by long-distance guns, their batteries in New York and London, their ammunition money, their range world-wide. Hitler's troops were crowding into Vienna that day, Franco's battering at the republican lines not so many miles from the Mediterranean, the Japanese were at the Grand Canal, the Poles on the Lithuanian frontier.

The cry of "The country is in danger" was a necessary as well as an adroit political move; inevitable, it rallied many conservatives whose nationalism is strong despite their hatred of Socialism. Mexican flags were carried at the demonstration, and the Mexican flag flies above the expropriated company buildings, refineries, tanks in Americanised, sweltering Tampico. Mexicans are accepting sacrifices out of patriotism.

THE OIL dispute was originally one for a collective contract, increased wages, and extended union participation in the industry. The companies and even many Mexicans believed that the extended union control was simply a maneuver in the labor racket to force the companies to take on more of the racketeer labor leaders' friends, do less work for more pay, and so on. Mexican labor is certainly still cursed to some extent by racketeering, but this was a movement not controlled by the racketeers.

The companies complained that if they agreed to the unions' demands, upheld by the Labor Board and the Supreme Court, they could not continue operations, since they would have practically no control over their own

business. They complained that the 26,000,000 peso wage increase on the existing staff plus what would have to be paid to additional employees when the unions gained virtual control of hiring and firing was bigger than their whole profits, and would in fact amount to 41,000,000. They claimed that their average profit was 68,000,000, the government Commission said 168,000,000. This was not really the point.

Cárdenas had declared that a company's liability to its workers was limited only by its maximum earning capacity. The oil companies undoubtedly concealed some of their profits by way of tax evasion, selling at cost or below to subsidiaries abroad, and being paid in London or New York. By placing the wage demands above the shown profits, either the companies would have to reveal their hidden income or go into liquidation. The strategy was as simple, basically, as it was daring; and entirely within Mexican law. The foreign capitalists went even further. They exported their capital in a plot to imperil Mexico's credit, thus endangering the whole agrarian reform, itself in the throes of organizational and climactic crisis. Would-be rebel leaders became active. Arms began to trickle over the United States border and up from Guatemala. In the market places, some peasants refused the government's banknotes, and 10,000,000 pesos of new-minted silver were distributed in three days. The peso wobbled and dropped, despite the imposition of a fantastically high tariff barrier. The Bank of Mexico suspended foreign exchange dealings.

Cárdenas promised that no more industries would be expropriated. Foreign "jackals," scenting a corpse, emerged to make profitable private loans. And in the oil fields, the workers decided to take half their pay in government bonds in order to create a fund to pay the indemnity. Small shopkeepers, the miners, the schoolteachers, even the customs-house agents, scraped centavos to help the government pay.

The government could not have accepted the specious claims and obvious defiance of the oil companies without confessing to its own impotence. A government board had thoroughly studied the whole question before handing down its decision on the wage increase. The companies had appealed the award to the highest court in the land. Even after the decision by the Supreme Court on March 1, the government still permitted the companies some

time in which to reconsider and comply with the law.

A showdown was inevitable, since the oil imperialists stubbornly refused. This intransigence, on the other hand, threw down the gauntlet before the labor federation. The immediate antagonist of the oil barons was the Oil Workers' Union. From the beginning, the C.T.M., under Lombardo Toledano, put the full weight of nearly a million organized



John Mackey

"Franco would not do a thing like that."

—CARDINAL O'CONNELL.

"We can't approve of this if it is true."

—CARDINAL HAYES.

"I think it strange that our government should protest."

—DEAN INGE.

workers behind the oil workers' demands. For the first time, there was genuine nation-wide labor solidarity. It was no longer a question involving only the "labor aristocracy"—even in real wages, the Mexican oil workers are relatively well paid. The fate of Mexican labor was and is at stake.

As soon as the labor struggle was brought into the sphere of politics after the government's Board of Conciliation and Arbitration gave its decision against the companies and the Supreme Court upheld it, the entire issue widened out. It became a test of how far the workers could rely on the executive. Abstractly, of course, there was nothing so new in the move toward nationalization. Calles had written it into his Six Year Plan, but had naturally not intended to carry it into effect. The plan had simply been electoral propaganda. Cárdenas, having exiled Calles, proceeded, to everyone's surprise, to take the plan seriously.

This had already happened in the case of the agrarian reform. But now it was carried a decisive step forward. The C.T.M. put it up squarely to Cárdenas whether he would carry out the full implications of the plan, and, by moving fast during the critical weekend of March 18, forced the issue, after the government had indulged in some hedging.

Hitherto, even a democrat like Cárdenas had made his own unchallenged decisions. Now, labor used its organized strength as a lever in a question that had become fundamentally political.

AT THE PRESENT, the oil industry is administered nationally by a committee of government ministers (Finance and National Economy), experts, and union members. Locally, the thirty-one sections of the Oil Workers' Union have committees of union representatives, with government and technical advisers, and a workers' Vigilance Committee to see to actual operations and prevent sabotage.

All the oil companies' property, wells, machinery, offices, trucks, typewriters, hospitals, houses, have passed to the workers, without friction. The refineries and wells are working normally—when they are working at all. The red and black flag of Mexican labor nowhere appears.

Cárdenas's position is juridically unassailable, as was that of the Spanish government in February 1936. The basis of the expropriation, the famous Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, affirming the nation's sovereignty over the sub-soil, was no modern revolutionary concept—it was drafted just *before* the Russian Revolution—but a reaffirmation of the old Spanish property-holding system which had operated in Mexico for 350 years before Porfirio Díaz, anxious to barter rich concessions, suspended it in favor of the oil imperialists. On this ground, the companies have no comeback.

The Spanish Popular Front fairly won the 1936 elections; Franco's revolt was meant to circumvent that decision. Law is only the front in the present Mexican affair. Even

Strength Through Joy

If you would have glory like a garment to cover your legs,
sit on your navel like a shirt of fire,
take from my hand the edgetool of destruction
and leave the cities of earth like rotten eggshells
staring sour and jagged at the barren moon;
and the parts of your body shall be glorious
partaking of my flesh. For I am he
the maker of honor, the hand bestowing judgment
seen in a cloud, the jaws of desolation,
begetter of dead men, eater of my sons,
and when any man is gnawed by the mouth of a cannon
I grow new teeth. I am filled with iron,
with fire and exhalations; I am magnificent,
honor the nails of my feet and the parings thereof
each being capable of killing. I am precious
and a treasure to women; honor then my knees
and the clasp of my thighs. And I will give you,
you, my dear children, my loving children, you
wearing my symbol on the fat of your arm
the beautiful moment, the moment of beautiful pain
with which you burst into flames; the high, the radiant
and honorable death. And when you die
be sure to use my name upon your lips
for your last word; this will be admirable
in you and me. I shall come
to set in your fallen flesh the roots of a tree
thorned and flowered with my name; your death shall be
a suitable decoration of gold at my breast
and I shall come bearing slaughter in the hand like bloodred berries
seeded with poison; glory for me,
glory, glory for me! and a bright crown of red berries.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

★ ★ ★

though the oil companies lost their case before the Supreme Court, their revolt is on. Already there is a crisis, for there are no tankers to shift the oil, and storage space is limited. Production will have to be pinched down. Standard and Shell practically control the world's oil market, and they can effect a boycott of nationalized Mexican oil. They are strong enough to prevent small countries—and perhaps even some large ones—from doing business profitably in other commodities if they show an inclination to take Mexican oil. The same tactic was once attempted against the U.S.S.R.

Mexico is facing a bad economic crisis. It is facing it at present in the first flush of nationalist exaltation. An enormous amount has been achieved. The executive has identified itself with the most advanced section of the workers. There is a very broad feeling of solidarity between the oil workers and other sections, notably the miners, railwaymen, and electricians, these most class-conscious of the Mexican workers. The movement has the full support of the intellectuals, of whom the school teachers are the most important organized section—and, in Mexico, a schoolmarm has to be quick on the draw because the Cristeros and

the dispossessed *hacendados* in some parts of the country tend to show their disapproval of Socialist education by lynching the teachers. These sections at least will stand firmly behind Cárdenas.

The expropriation of the Mexican oil companies already appears to have an importance beyond that of local politics or even of one more move in the great international poker game of oil politics. Both Standard and Shell—called Aguila and Huasteca in Mexico—have huge holdings elsewhere, so that expulsion from Mexico is of no great economic importance to them. The oil combine has simply to increase production in other fields where it has hitherto been limited by the necessity of keeping up the world price. Counter attack will be a matter of principle rather than profit. Deterding was once humiliated by Primo de Rivera, of all people. The supporter of Hitler will be even more irritated by the opposition of a Central American president whose representative at Geneva actually had the nerve to protest publicly against the rape of Austria. But the opposition will initiate with the extreme Mexican reactionaries who refuse to accept the fact that red is one of the colors of the Mexican flag.



Hirschfeld

"Italian-British Negotiations May Prepare Ground for World Peace"—NEWS ITEM

A Long-Term Policy

CONCERTED ACTION OR ISOLATION: WHICH IS THE PATH TO PEACE?

By Earl Browder

THE editors of the *New Republic*, together with some Socialist Party spokesmen, have recently defended their isolationist advocacy by speculating (in print) that the Communist Party will itself soon abandon its energetic support to a policy of concerted action. The utter unsoundness of that speculation is of a single piece with their whole isolationist position. The policy of concerted action for peace is not a short-time or emergency policy merely; it is valid for a whole period, and for all circumstances of that period, whether in the fight to prevent war or the fight to end a war already under way. The immediate practical aspects of such a policy may change from time to time, as some forces swing over from one side to the other, and as war is broadened or narrowed, but the essence of the policy is valid so long as war is the main danger to the world.

In saying this, of course, there is no intention to deny the *emergency* phase of the fight for peace today. These are truly critical days, when millions of lives hang in the balance, and when the balance may be turned one way or the other, accordingly as the United States turns decisively toward isolation or toward international coöperation for peace. The time is short for the masses of the United States to come to a conclusion—if they really desire to exercise their full potentialities for world peace. Time is the essence of the problem, and haste is needed as never before in history.

It is necessary, however, to dissolve once and for all the fatally mistaken notion that international coöperation for peace is a makeshift policy, hurriedly concocted for an emergency, which must at a moment's notice win full support of all its potential adherents or be dropped as a failure.

At this moment, the dangerous implications of such a short-sighted view are seen in the opinion, expressed by many shallow publicists, that the latest moves of the Chamberlain government at London, which take Britain another step away from concerted action for peace, and which strengthen the warmakers, become a signal of the bankruptcy of the policy of coöperation.

It is unfortunate that the short-sighted view seems to determine the practical course of the Washington Administration, however much President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull may reiterate their sound and correct ideas in general terms. The Administration had opened the door for the repeal or fundamental revision of the disastrous "Neutrality Act," when it consented to the House Foreign Relations Committee opening hearings on the various bills directed to that end. But it suddenly

caused the cancellation of the hearings, when it learned of Chamberlain's latest pronouncement. It is clear that for all practical purposes the Administration is conditioning all its moves upon the leadership of England. The theory of "parallel action," which is at variance with the theory of international coöperation, is the theory that the United States must under no circumstances take the lead. It is a cowardly and dangerous theory, which is paralyzing American action at the most crucial moment, and doing incalculable damage to the world.

American policy at this moment is thus subordinated, in the most humiliating form, to dictation from Downing Street, London. And one of the ironic jokes of history is this, that precisely those who are most pleased by this are the men who have been wailing loudest against the policy of concerted action, on the grounds that it would subordinate us to British interests! This paradox reveals that the isolationists do not fear taking policy from London so long as the reactionary Chamberlain determines the policy, but they refuse to have agreement with London only if the Labor Party determines the policy.

That may be completely consistent for Hearst and Coughlin, for whom the British Labor Party is only another web of Stalin's "red network." But Norman Thomas, Frederick Libby, and Oswald Garrison Villard swallow the identical conclusion with equal equanimity. They are no more disturbed by their alliance with Chamberlain abroad, than they are by their hook-up with the most reactionary circles at home.

NORMAN THOMAS, especially, stands in an ambiguous position, for which he has offered the public not a word of explanation. He is National Chairman of the Socialist Party, affiliated with the Labor and Socialist International; his brother Socialists all over the world are fully committed to the policy of concerted action for peace, both as national parties and collectively through the Executive Committee of their International. But Thomas and his party in America fight for Chamberlain's line and against the line of the Labor Party, co-members with Thomas of the International. Thomas fights against the line of Blum, Socialist Premier of France, and against the line of the French Confederation of Labor, and for the line of the right-wing radicals who keep Blum's government paralyzed in relation to Spain. Thomas fights against the line of Negrin, Socialist Premier of Spain, and supports those elements who are trying to overthrow Negrin and his government. Thomas fights

against the line of the Scandinavian Socialist Parties, whose leaders participate in their governments and demand collective security. Thomas is in full and complete contradiction to the policy of every European Socialist Party and of the whole organized labor movement of Europe. But he remains in the same International with them, and offers not a single word of explanation to America. He fights against their official position—but in America he attributes this position only to the Communists and says he is against it because it is a "Russian" policy. *He never explains that he is fighting against the position upon which the world Socialist and Communist movements are agreed.* He never explains that his policy is not only isolation for the United States government, but also isolation for United States Socialists from their brothers in other lands. If he would frankly withdraw from the Labor and Socialist International, this would at least remove some of the worst hypocrisy, even if it would leave him in error as deeply as before.

Thomas may reply that his brothers abroad carry out their professed policy of international coöperation very poorly or even not at all. That is an entirely different issue. To the extent that they do execute their declared policy they are working for international unity and for peace, and the problem is to secure the execution of an established policy; but the more Thomas carries out his policy, the more is international unity disrupted and the cause of peace damaged, and the problem with Thomas is therefore to change his policy.

Roosevelt and Hull must be sharply criticized for allowing the reactionary maneuvers of Chamberlain to determine American policy. We must call upon them to have the courage of their own convictions. If Chamberlain, in control of British policy, does not agree with them, all the more reason for implementing their declared convictions together with those powers which do agree, without delay. The United States, which is in the most advantageous position of any nation, must assume the leadership, the responsibility which we inherit from our privileged position.

It is precisely against American leadership in the struggle for peace that the isolationists fight frenziedly, hysterically. Whenever this idea is broached, they immediately begin to tell us that the Americans are such nincompoops, so constitutionally inferior, such utter incompetents, that we cannot engage in a leading role in international affairs without being cheated out of our pants. They picture Uncle Sam as the country bumpkin who went to town once in 1917, bought a gold brick, and now must be kept strictly at home on the farm in

order to keep him from giving the old homestead away to the first sharper he meets.

Of course, this caricature of Uncle Sam is tempered by the assurance that if our brains are mush, at least our hearts are pure gold. If Europe has a monopoly upon intelligence, then America, they assure us, has a monopoly on virtue. But to keep our virtue, we must remain strictly at home behind our garden walls. We may continue to help the warmakers, but at all costs we must not help their victims or we are irretrievably lost. Such is the isolationist estimate of American character and intelligence.

If there was any truth in this gross caricature, then it might occur to even the most empty-headed of such a moron nation that perhaps we are predestined to fall victims to the devilish clever men of other lands, isolation or no. In such a case, the quicker we get some of those brains on our side the better, if we are really convinced we have no brains of our own.

As for me, speaking as an American whose line can be traced back to 1680 in Virginia, and speaking also for the latest naturalized citizen, I would like to denounce this whole picture as a vile slander upon our people. It may be accurate for some of the degenerate sons and daughters of our "sixty families," who furnish most of the money for isolationist propaganda, but it has not the remotest resemblance to the American workers and farmers, and those middle classes who have not been corrupted by monopoly capital. Americans do not claim any monopoly upon virtue, and we hotly resent any idea that we are excluded from our share of intelligence. We can take care of ourselves, and hold up our end, anywhere and everywhere—provided we learn how to take care of our own reactionaries—and muddleheads—right here in America itself.

AMERICA must step forward. Litvinov, for the Soviet Union, after waiting long for an initiative from elsewhere, called for an international conference. If Roosevelt and Hull, for reasons of "practical politics"—that reason which produces so many impractical results—or reasons of prestige, cannot directly respond to that initiative, then let them take the initiative themselves. And if we want something practical to result, let the United States clear its own record a bit to win more international respect, by canceling the infamous "Neutrality Act," and adopting the O'Connell Peace Act, on the basis of which real coöperation is possible.

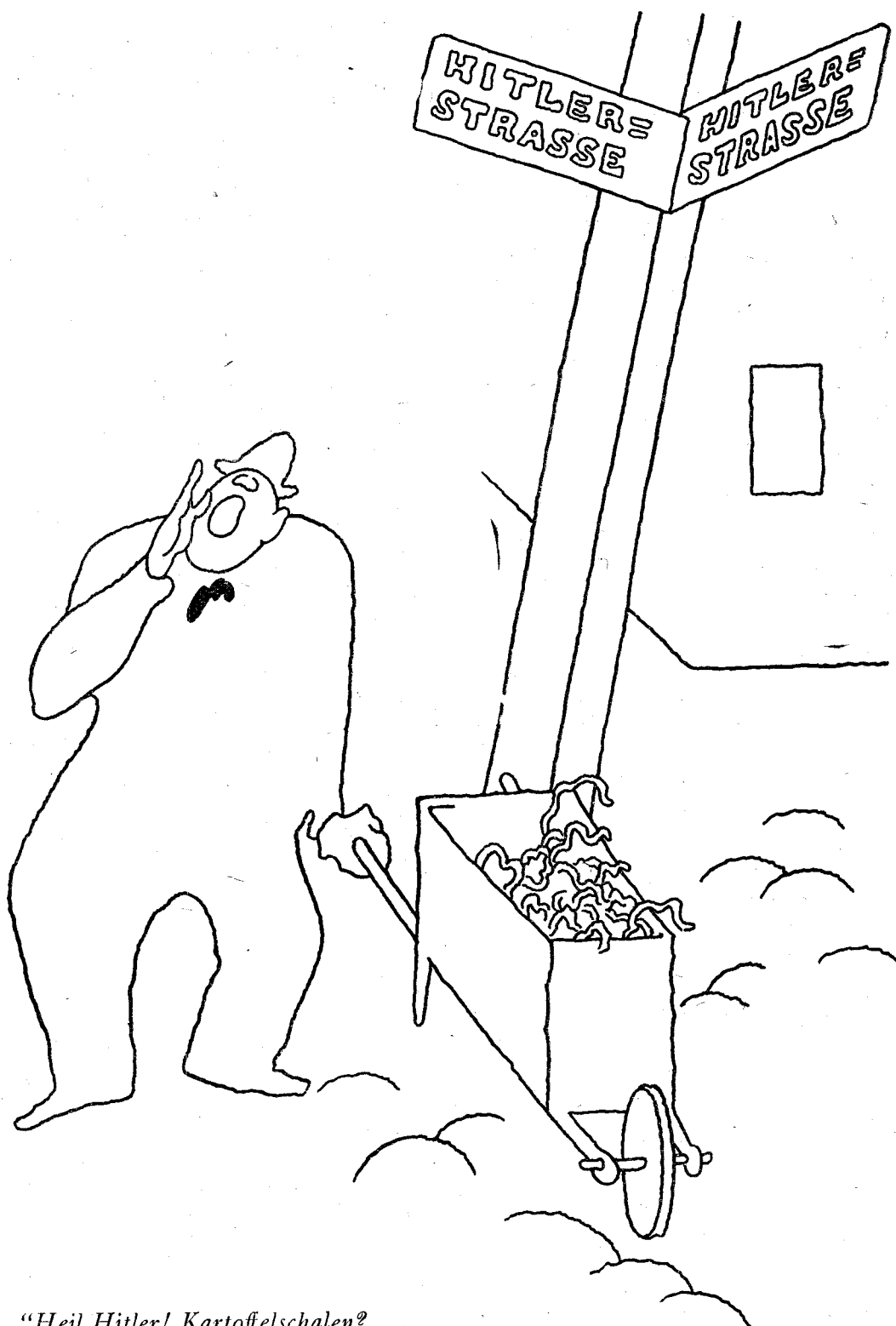
There are still some people who argue, concerted action was possible several years ago, as a practical measure, but now with so many great powers out of the League and others showing their contempt for it, this has become a Utopian project. That is the same thing as saying that concerted action for peace is practical, so long as there is no immediate danger of war. When war approaches as a serious prospect, they say, concerted action becomes impractical. That is of a piece with the logic

which assures us a certain remedy is very good so long as we are not sick, but as soon as we fall ill, it is dangerous to take it. It is precisely now, when every action or inaction is fraught with many dangers, that the peace-seeking peoples of the world must find the way to act together or face the consequence of going down together in a chaos of fascism and war.

To the degree that war spreads, to that degree does the policy of concerted action among the peace-seeking peoples become all the more important and necessary. This is a long-time policy, which must direct the fight for peace over a protracted period. It is the only road

for the prevention of war, and it is the only road for the ending of war already begun. Concerted action must begin at home, by the concerted voice and action of all our fighters for peace. President Roosevelt has indicated the correct policy in his speeches, but he still lacks the courage or the support necessary to put it into effect. Let us see that he does not fail for want of support.

This is the final article in Earl Browder's series on concerted action and isolation. The reader is referred to Mr. Browder's letter in Readers' Forum, page 21 of this issue.



"Heil Hitler! Kartoffelschalen?
Heil Hitler! Kartoffelschalen? . . ."

Gardner Rea

Who Is the Little Business Man?

By A. B. Magil

AN Associated Press dispatch from Washington in the March 17 issue of the *New York Times* states:

At least fifty organizations of small businessmen have sprung up since the February "little business" conference, officials of the Department of Commerce estimated today.

Literature received here indicated that the more active groups have platforms opposing chain stores and monopolies and seeking tax revision and more liberal credit.

Certain it is that the small businessmen, who are perhaps the least organized section of our population, are in need of some means of acting together for their common welfare. And the fact that opposition to monopoly abuses, tax relief, and the liberalization of credit are uppermost in the platforms of these organizations indicates that they are attempting to deal with the genuine problems of the small businessman. Yet it remains true that little businessmen, by their very position as small capitalists in a big capitalist economy, are particularly vulnerable to the pressure and seductions of the dominant finance-capitalist groups. And unless the labor and progressive movements establish contact with the organizations of small businessmen and assist them in the solution of their problems, they may become the dupes and catspaws of those very monopolies whose oppressive practices have brought them into existence.

The need for organizing the small businessmen along progressive lines has been emphasized by the developments at the little business conference in Washington. The implications of that conference were far-reaching. And it ineluctably posed the question: Can the small businessman be won to the struggle for the defense of democracy?—a question which Louis B. Boudin, in his review in the March 1 issue of the *NEW MASSES* of *The People's Front*, the new book by Earl Browder, has definitely answered in the negative.

It is to the credit of the Roosevelt Administration that by means of this conference it sought to give articulation to a section of the population that has hitherto had little voice in the nation's affairs. And it is no reflection on those who attended the conference that, brought together from various parts of the country, strangers to each other, without previous experience in organization and without sure guidance, their speech was at times muddled, their ideas contradictory, and their proposals too often an echo of those big business groups which have for so long dominated them.

Much that happened at the Washington conference still remains to be cleared up. The very concept, "small businessman," seems to have been expansively defined. An Associated Press dispatch in the *New York Times* of

February 3 quoted Administration spokesmen as unofficially defining a small businessman as anyone doing a gross business of less than \$1,000,000 a year and having fewer than 500 employees. This is generous indeed; and it would not be surprising if the corner grocer found it difficult to see eye to eye with anyone whose business approached this maximum limit. Jesse Jones, chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, went even further. He happens to be a wealthy Texas banker, but in addressing the conference he spoke "as a little businessman myself." And he defined little business as follows:

"Organizations like General Motors, Big Steel, and so forth are big business—the rest of us are little business." That would include corporations doing many millions of dollars' business a year.

The composition of the conference and of the committee that presented its program to President Roosevelt would seem to indicate, too, that the poorest sections of little business—small grocers, butchers, merchants, etc.—were very inadequately represented, the majority of the delegates being independent capitalists in industries that are not highly trustified, but which feel, nevertheless, the pressure of the monopolies. And the conferees came for the most part from the East, New York furnishing the largest delegation, with the South, where Roosevelt sentiment is strong, and the Far West very meagerly represented. (The committee of twelve that saw Roosevelt did not include a single delegate from the area west of Chicago.)

Nor did big business itself keep hands off the conference. The large employers evidently found it not too difficult to smuggle in their emissaries, particularly since the conference was held under the auspices of that sensitive refractor of the big business viewpoint, Secretary of Commerce Roper. Not all the confusion—which the press greatly exaggerated—could be attributed to deliberate disruption, but Fred Roth, chairman of the conference, was undoubtedly talking to the point when he charged that trouble-makers had been planted and their expenses paid.

The *Sunday Worker* of February 27 offered documentary proof that these trouble-makers were no imaginary bogies, and that their activities were not confined to creating disorder. It published a photostatic copy of a letter from E. T. Lay, executive secretary of the Associated Industries of Florida, Inc., affiliated with the National Association of Manufacturers, boasting that he and J. C. McCorkhill, first vice-president of the Associated Industries, had attended the conference and "practically dictated and secured the adoption of the entire report opposing wages and hours legislation, and for the investigation

and amendment of the 'Wagner Labor Relations Act.'"

In view of these handicaps and the fact that the labor and progressive movements have as yet made few serious efforts to counteract the big business influences that surround the small businessmen, the surprising thing is not that the conference adopted a number of reactionary resolutions, but that it sounded so strong an anti-monopoly note. Yet Boudin, in his review of Browder's important book, cites the Washington conference in support of his thesis that little business is completely and irrevocably in the tow of big business, and, "if anything, may be expected to be more reactionary than big business—at least in intention."

Louis Boudin was one of the leading figures in the left wing of the pre-War Socialist Party. That wing had important shortcomings, due to its inadequate understanding of Marxism and its lack of knowledge of Lenin's further development of the teachings of Marx and Engels, to meet the problems of the present epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. But the left wing represented on the whole a healthy revolt against the dominant opportunist Hillquit-Berger right wing, and in 1919 it became the foundation on which the Communist Party was built. In reviewing Browder's book, Boudin, who is not a Communist, has dealt with some of the most important official pronouncements of the Communist Party in the recent period. And the fact that his review is by and large sympathetic is further testimony that the Communist Party is today the link with all that was best and strongest in the pre-War labor movement.

There is one point, however, on which Communists differ most emphatically with Boudin. In his review he expresses the conviction that in the central conflict of our time, that between the forces of democracy and fascism, the small businessman is foredoomed to take the side of reaction and fascism. Moreover, he seems to imply that the Communist Party is in agreement with him, but that Browder has neglected to make this clear in his book, indulging in such "ambiguous" statements as: "Let the farmers and *middle classes* take a leaf from the book of the C.I.O.," etc. (Boudin's emphasis.) There is a real contradiction here; it is not, however, in the position of the Communist Party or its outstanding leader, but in that of Boudin. To reject the small businessman as a potential ally in the struggle against fascism is actually to reject the whole policy of the people's front, which is based on a class alliance of the workers, farmers, and urban middle classes. Fortunately, Boudin does not draw the logical practical conclusions from his theoretical posi-

tion, for in the first part of his review he indicates his approval of the people's-front policy and of the general approach of the Communist Party toward the political problems that face America today.

Boudin, it seems to me, makes three principal errors: (1) he tends to identify the people's-front policy with the petty-bourgeois reformism of the pre-War Socialist Party; (2) he at times confuses the maintenance and expansion of democracy, which is the immediate issue, with the ultimate struggle for Socialism; (3) he overemphasizes psychological phenomena, making them the all-powerful factor in determining the political role of the small businessman. Coupled with these errors is a static, non-dialectical conception of the relations between classes, with the little businessmen regarded as a single undifferentiated reactionary mass, completely immunized to all progressive influences. Boudin is quite ready to grant that other sections of the middle class, presumably salaried employees and professionals, can be won to the side of labor and the farmers, but not the little businessmen.

Boudin points to one of the right-wing leaders of the pre-War Socialist Party, Robert Hunter, who "insisted that the fight for Socialism was a fight of the people against the 'upper four hundred thousand.'" He concedes that the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people were and are opposed to the interests of the small number of monopolists at the top, but declares that Hunter and his colleagues failed to take into consideration "the psychological factors . . . which make people act contrary to their better interests." It was this, he says, "which led to the ultimate wrecking of the Socialist Party," and he therefore urges the Communist Party to avoid this pitfall by making it clear that it will have nothing to do with those myrmidons of reaction, the small businessmen.

This would indeed be a timely warning were it true that the mistake of the pre-War Socialist Party was that it sought to effect an alliance with the small businessmen. The basic error of international social-democracy, including the American Socialist Party, however, was not that it attempted to cooperate with the little businessmen, but that it *subordinated* the labor movement to middle-class leadership and ideas. In practice this meant all too frequently converting labor into the tail to the big capitalist kite. And the obverse of this failure to pursue an independent class policy was the Socialist Party's serious neglect of the *specific* problems of the farmers and city middle classes. As a result, it was unable to unite them with the workers in the common struggle against the "upper four hundred thousand."

The middle-class reform movements, from the Greenback, Farmers' Alliance, Populist, and Bryan movements of the Seventies, Eighties, and Nineties to the LaFollette movement in 1924, suffered from a variation of essentially the same weakness. All these movements ended in futility and collapse because labor, the only consistently progressive class in capi-



John Helliker

"Utility holding companies and their God-given natural resources in the hands of the S.E.C.! Nothing is sacred any more, Stilbourne—nothing!"

talist society, played in them a subordinate and dependent role.

The people's front, however, aims to achieve an alliance of workers, farmers, and middle classes *under the leadership of the working class*, with the trade unions as its foundation. In the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, the American Labor Party, and the activities of Labor's Non-Partisan League we have the beginnings of such a people's-front movement.

Boudin also tends to confuse the question of Socialism with the immediate issue of the preservation of democracy, though earlier in his review he cites as one of the merits of Browder's book and of the Communist Party that they make this important distinction. Because the crowding out of the small businessman by big business "does not necessarily lead him to the conclusion that he would be better off in a non-business world," Boudin concludes that the small businessman is hopelessly reactionary. Certain it is that the majority of the American people, including the workers, have not yet come to understand that they would be better off in a non-business world. Are they, therefore, likewise reactionary?

What about the "psychological factors" that Boudin so strongly underscores? It is true that small businessmen, by virtue of their position as small producers and tradesmen within the capitalist system of production and exchange, tend to reflect the class outlook and prejudices and to follow the political leadership of the large monopolies that control the system. Boudin, however, converts a *tendency* into an accomplished and inexorable fact. Moreover, he fails to see the possibility of the opposite tendency, arising out of the serious economic conflicts between little business and big business. Boudin admits that these con-

flicts exist, that there is a "life and death struggle, economically, between big business and little business," and that "in the actual conduct of business the small businessman feels himself crowded by big business." Nevertheless, he insists that "the little businessman can no more be counted on to become the ally of the working class either in the improving of living conditions generally or the preservation of democracy than big business itself." Though Boudin offers his emphasis on the psychological as a "merit of Marxian criticism," he has on this point actually abandoned Marxian materialism. For he has converted the psychological factor into a towering and immutable law that overrides all economic conflicts and all counteracting influences.

This attitude toward the small businessman has been more fully elaborated by Lewis Corey in his book, *The Crisis of the Middle Class*. Corey in one place even views the middle class as the creator of fascism ("Out of the middle class leaps the monster of fascism"), though elsewhere he describes fascism as a product of finance-capital. Unlike Boudin, Corey has since pursued his negative attitude toward the little businessman to its logical conclusion: he has become an opponent of the people's front and, with it, of the policy of collective security to halt fascist aggression.

There is no support for this pessimistic view of the role of little business in the teachings of Marx and Engels, let alone of Lenin who, in opposition to Trotsky, emphasized the necessity of an alliance of the working class with the middle strata of country and city and with the oppressed colonial peoples. It is true that one can find numerous unflattering references to the middle class in the writings of Marx and Engels, but these are criticisms

of the subordination of the working class to the middle class, as was the case in France during and after the revolution of 1848, and of harmful middle-class influences within the working-class movement. Marx and Engels, in fact, repeatedly condemned sectarian tendencies toward regarding all classes except the working class as "one reactionary mass." In his famous *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx took up the cudgels against this concept. After citing the position of the *Communist Manifesto*, which specifically pointed out the twofold tendency, conservative and revolutionary, of the middle classes, he said:

From this point of view it is thus nonsense again that they [the middle classes], together with the bourgeoisie and the feudal class into the bargain, form "only a homogeneous reactionary mass" in opposition to the working class.

Did we proclaim to the artisans, *small industrialists*, etc., and peasants during the last elections: "You form merely a homogeneous reactionary mass against us with the bourgeois and feudal classes"? [Emphasis mine.—A. B. M.]

Engels in several letters made essentially the same criticism. Perhaps the clearest statement of the position of Marx and Engels on this question is contained in that magnificent account of the Paris Commune of 1871, Marx's *The Civil War in France*. He wrote:

This was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative, even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, tradesmen, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted. The Commune had saved them by a sagacious settlement of that ever recurring cause of dispute among the middle class themselves—the debtor and creditor accounts. The same portion of the middle class, after they had assisted in putting down the workmen's insurrection of June 1848, had been at once unceremoniously sacrificed to their creditors by the then Constituent Assembly. But this was not their only motive for rallying round the working class. They felt there was but one alternative—the Commune, or the Empire—under whatever name it might reappear. The Empire had ruined them economically by the havoc it made of public wealth, by the wholesale financial swindling it fostered, by the props it lent to the artificially accelerated centralization of capital, and the concomitant expropriation of their own ranks. It had suppressed them politically, it had shocked them morally by its orgies, it had insulted their Voltairianism by handing over the education of their children to the *frères Ignorantins*, it had revolted their national feeling as Frenchmen by precipitating them headlong into a war which left only one equivalent for the ruins it made—the disappearance of the Empire. In fact, after the exodus from Paris of the high Bonapartist and capitalist *Bohème*, the true middle-class Party of Order came out in the shape of the "Union Republicaine," enrolling themselves under the colors of the Commune and defending it against the willful misconstruction of Thiers.

Two considerations should be borne in mind which make Marx's tribute to the small businessmen of Paris all the more impressive. The little businessmen in his day constituted a relatively more numerous section of the middle class than they do today. In the United States, for example, 74 percent of the middle class in 1870 consisted of small businessmen, whereas today only about 20 percent are in-

dependent entrepreneurs, the rest being salaried employees and professionals. If, then, the small businessmen, as Boudin maintains, are hopelessly reactionary, the relative weight of their influence in opposition to progress should have been far greater at the time of the Commune than it is today. Moreover, these businessmen were being asked to support, not a movement such as the present-day people's front, whose program does not go beyond the framework of capitalism, but the first dictatorship of the proletariat, the Commune! If Boudin is right, they should have been the shock troops of the Versailles reaction.

Today the possibility of breaking "the intellectual domination" of the economic royalists over the little fellows is, if anything, even greater than it was in Marx's time. The rapid development of monopoly has sharpened the conflicts between little business and big business, and the growth of the danger of fascism, threatening economic ruin for the middle classes and the destruction of their political liberties, has made small businessmen more amenable to progressive influences. And events throughout the world show that this is no mere wishful thinking. Small businessmen are more numerous in France in proportion to the total of those gainfully employed than in any advanced capitalist country. Yet it was in France that the middle classes joined with the workers and farmers to form the first people's-front movement. Thanks to the people's front, France has thus far been spared the fate of Germany, Italy, and Austria. Can it be said that the party of the French middle classes, the Radical Socialist Party, for all its wavering and timidity, has played a reactionary role in the struggle against fascism? And is it not a fact that the small businessmen of Spain, represented by the various left republican parties, have sided overwhelmingly with the government?

In the United States the trade union movement, including its most progressive section, the C.I.O., has tended to neglect the small

businessmen and to pursue a narrow "labor" policy on both the economic and political fields. (The C.I.O. and Labor's Non-Partisan League are now taking steps to remedy this.) As a result, numbers of little business folk were misled into joining the vigilante bands during the auto and steel strikes last year, while in Detroit and other cities they helped elect reactionary big business candidates. Boudin, however, ignores labor's blame for this situation and concludes fatalistically that the behavior of little business must inevitably be cast in the big-business mold. Nor is the conduct of little business nearly as uniform as Boudin would have us believe. There have been scores of strikes in which small business people have come to the aid of the strikers. During the height of the vigilante outbreaks last year a conference in New Kensington, Pa., called to combat vigilantism, was attended by delegates from—the local Chamber of Commerce. And despite the expertness of those high-minded evangels of the Florida tobacco trust, Messrs. Lay and McCorkhill, in driving through a report at the Washington little business conference opposing wages and hours legislation, it is not without significance that a subsequent Department of Commerce analysis of one thousand letters received from small businessmen showed that of thirty-five which discussed wages and hours legislation, all but four favored it.

What is true is that if we "let nature take its course," the majority of the little businessmen will inevitably gravitate toward big business and become the camp followers of reaction. The Communist Party, however, applying in a new historical setting the basic teachings of the great founders of Marxism, is showing the great possibilities that exist for winning the middle classes to the side of progress and democracy. This is one of the central emphases of Browder's book. It was the establishment of the Socialist-Communist united front in France and the movement for the unification of the trade unions that made it possible to break the Radical Socialist Party away from a policy of tailing behind reaction and enlist it in the great people's front against fascism and war. And in the United States the Communist Party is actively working for the creation of a broad democratic front in every part of the country for the 1938 elections, with a program that will include special demands for the small businessmen, such as tax revision in the interest of small enterprise, the curbing of high monopoly prices, the refinancing of mortgages at low interest rates, the provision of liberal credit facilities for little business, etc.

Is it not reasonable to suppose that just as the small businessmen of Paris, when faced with the alternative of the Commune or the Empire, chose the Commune because it defended their interests against predatory big capital, so the majority of the small businessmen of America today, if labor comes forward as the champion of their most pressing needs, will choose democracy instead of fascism, the people's front instead of Wall Street?



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Editors

THEODORE DRAPER, GRANVILLE HICKS, CROCKETT JOHNSON,
JOSHUA KUNITZ, A. B. MAGIL, HERMAN MICHELSON,
BRUCE MINTON, SAMUEL SILLEN.

Contributing Editors

ROBERT FORSYTHE, JOSEPH FREEMAN, MICHAEL GOLD,
HORACE GREGORY, ALFRED O'MALLEY, LOREN MILLER,
ISIDOR SCHNEIDER, MARGUERITE YOUNG.

Business and Circulation Manager

GEORGE WILLNER

Advertising Manager

ERIC BERNAY



No Pasaràn!

THERE is no truth in the "all is lost" tone of the dispatches about Spain which have appeared in the American press in the last two weeks. Predictions in London that the war will be over by April are simply meant to demoralize organized efforts to assist republican Spain in the United States, France, and England. They reflect Chamberlain policy, not Spanish policy. At every critical moment in this war, these vicious prophecies have regularly appeared and have just as regularly been disproved by events.

There is no denying that Spanish democracy is fighting with its back against the wall. The odds are tragically unequal. An army of invaders, boasting an overwhelming superiority in arms and equipment, has reached the borders of Catalonia. It is reliably reported that seven hundred planes are operating on the insurgent side, that fleets of one hundred planes are used to attack a single village.

But Catalonia is the economic stronghold of Spain. It alone has tremendous powers of resistance if every ounce of flesh and material reserve is thrown into the breach. That is just what is happening. The Barcelona of April 1938 is the Madrid of November 1936. It is rallying every resource at its command to halt the rebel offensive. No friend of Spanish democracy can do less. The time is critical. Like Barcelona, we must not flinch. Redouble efforts for Spain!

A New Deal Victory

THE Reorganization Bill involves no world-shaking principles. It is a measure designed to improve the efficiency of government, and, as Arthur Krock points out in the *New York Times* of March 29, the powers delegated to the President "have been sought by three other Presidents and were almost given to Herbert Hoover by a Democratic Congress." But tory hatred of Roosevelt has reached the stage where the reactionaries are ready to use any stick to beat the New Deal.

The fight on the Reorganization Bill was led by the same Wheelers and Burkes and Byrds who directed the crusade against the Supreme Court reform plan. And in their last-minute drive against the bill they did not hesitate to call on the discredited fascist mountebank, Father Coughlin, who attacked the bill as establishing a totalitarian state exactly one week after he had himself proposed the creation of a corporate state in which all political parties would be abolished.

The defeat of this bi-partisan tory crowd on what would ordinarily have been a minor issue was thus, by the very nature of the struggle, transformed into a major victory for the New Deal. It ought to pave the way for similar victories on the more important issues that face the country.

Minnesota Stays United

THE convention of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Association (the official membership organization of the Farmer-Labor Party) meeting March 25-26 in Duluth, the third largest city in the state, with some 1,300 delegates and alternates present, disappointed the Republican Party press most bitterly.

With wishful thinking, the entire reactionary press of the state heralded the convention with predictions of a split, an orgy of Red-baiting, open clashes between delegates from C.I.O. and A.F. of L. unions, a purge of the Communists, and the endorsement of a conservative program to exorcise the imp of Communism.

Nothing of the kind occurred. The 1938 program is more forthright in its economic and social proposals and on the question of war and peace than the 1936 platform.

The Republican Party agents inside and outside the convention (Hjalmar Peterson's followers), their Trotskyist allies, and all other shoddy elements made the Communists their main target. Weekly propaganda sheets whose financial backing is a mystery, leaflets, letters signed by anyone willing to slander the Communists, deluged the convention. In the convention committees, A.F. of L. bureaucrats joined with their kindred of the Railway Brotherhoods to threaten Governor Elmer A. Benson and other Farmer-Labor Party leaders with sabotage and defeat at the coming campaign if their unprincipled demands were rejected.

The great majority of the rank and file of the convention backed Governor Benson and Congressmen Bernard and Teigan in their refusal to revise the program to the right or to countenance Red-baiting in any form. The question of the right of Communists to represent unions, coöperatives, Farmer-Labor

clubs, and other working class and farmer organizations never even came on the floor of the convention. On this issue, the reactionary opposition met complete defeat. The Republican Party agents and Trotskyites must now work from some other angle for a while in their efforts to disrupt and destroy the Farmer-Labor Party and defeat its candidates.

The real threat to the unity of the convention and the Farmer-Labor Party came from the extreme right. The Communist delegates in the convention (and there were a goodly number) were joined by all progressive forces in their successful efforts to remove this threat. The Farmer-Labor Party came out of this convention more united and stronger than ever before—a result directly contrary to that expected by its enemies. A split would have been disastrous for the labor and farmer movement in Minnesota and would undoubtedly have had a most discouraging effect on the progressive people's political movements now developing in the vast stretches of the Rocky Mountain region and the Pacific Northwest.

The convention struggle, out of which came a unanimously adopted platform and slate, headed by Governor Benson, has made it possible for Minnesota's workers, farmers, and all progressives to enter the 1938 campaign with a united Farmer-Labor Party as their mighty weapon.

How Not to Get a Wage Cut

FOR six months, the Big Three of the rubber industry—Firestone, Goodrich, and Goodyear—have been warning Akron rubber workers that the union must accept wage reductions and longer hours, or the companies would move South. The threats were echoed by the Greater Akron Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

Goodrich led the initial attack. Unless the union accepted a 17½ percent wage cut and a forty-hour week in place of the thirty-six-hour week, the company stated, it would move a large volume of its production out of Akron. It proposed a vote of union workers to decide the question.

Clearly, if Goodrich succeeded, the other rubber companies would follow suit. The United Rubber Workers' Union took up the challenge. It called a mass protest demonstration. Despite rumors of vigilante violence against union members, the meeting was the largest ever held in the history of Akron, larger even than the strike meetings of 1936 and 1937. The protest convinced the Goodrich Company that its threats, instead of frightening the workers, had only roused their militancy. The company called off the vote, canceled the wage cut, forgot

about the longer work week, and stopped talking about moving. But the union was not so easily placated. It filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board protesting the coercive propaganda campaign by the company and other organizations. As Sherman H. Dalrymple, president of the United Rubber Workers, told the membership, "It is a good deal easier to take a wage cut than it is to get it back." And so the rubber workers decided that they just wouldn't take it. This isn't 1929.

Brown Pestilence

AMONG the victims of the brown pestilence that has spread over Austria are some of the most distinguished representatives of world culture. Suicides and imprisonments of writers, scientists, professors, musicians, etc., tell the ghastly tale of the cultural shambles that once was Austria. Bruno Walter has been ousted as director of the Vienna Opera; Sigmund Freud, now more than eighty years old, after having his home searched by storm troopers, is being kept virtual prisoner in a hospital; Egon Friedell, historian and actor, and Professor Gustav Bayer of Innsbruck University have committed suicide; Professor Otto Loewi, Nobel prize winner in medicine in 1936, and Professor Heinrich Neumann, famous ear specialist, have been arrested. And so it goes. Over Vienna, long famous as a center of science and art, have been raised the totem poles of Nazi anti-science, race hatred, and cultural barbarism. Can American writers, artists, scientists, and educators remain silent in the face of these atrocities?

An Unfriendly Act

THE hasty cessation of purchases by the United States Treasury of Mexican silver constitutes intervention in the internal affairs of our southern neighbor, clearly in conflict with the pledges of both President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull. The voice is that of Morgenthau, but the hand is that of Standard Oil.

According to the 1933 agreement, the United States agreed to buy 5,000,000 ounces of silver monthly at forty-five cents an ounce in order to help Mexico stabilize its currency. This agreement had to be renewed from month to month, so that its abrogation on April 1 violated no bond. It did violate the essence of the "good neighbor" policy. It is a repudiation in fact of Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau's declaration of last January: "We don't mix our silver and other matters."

That is just what Mr. Morgenthau is

now doing. His unfriendly act can only be interpreted as pressure upon the Cárdenas government to surrender to Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell. Abrogation of the silver agreement was the last trick held by the oil companies. They had sponsored a large-scale flight of capital out of Mexico. They had sabotaged the Mexican government's social program. They had inspired a boycott of Mexican-owned oil. They had financed and encouraged Mexico's fascists. When all this was not enough, they struck directly at the basis of Mexican economy, the value of the peso. And this latter could only be done through the United States Treasury.

Mr. Morgenthau's announcement referred, rather cryptically, to "the decision of the government of the United States to re-examine certain of its financial and commercial relationships with Mexico." There are no relationships needing such re-examination. What Mr. Morgenthau meant but did not say was that Washington is reconsidering the relationships between Mexico and certain American investors. Judging by its first fruits, that reconsideration hits below the belt at Mexico's New Deal under President Cárdenas and, in the long run, at Roosevelt's New Deal as well. The companies favored by the silver decision are bitter foes of the American New Deal. Should Cárdenas fall, the United States will be confronted with the menace of fascism at its borders, a fascism that will largely be dominated by Germany.

Capitulation to Chamberlain

THE sudden reversal of the plans for hearings by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on peace legislation has shocked and dismayed friends of peace throughout the country. Just what happened to cause this overnight capitulation to the isolationists is not clear, but undoubtedly the British tory government's continued pro-fascist policy and its refusal to give any assurances to Czechoslovakia in the face of Hitler's Austrian coup have caused the administration to beat a hasty retreat in the direction in which the reactionaries in the State Department and in Congress have been all along trying to force it. What this means is that, far from pursuing an independent course, American policy, as Earl Browder points out in this issue of the NEW MASSES, "is thus subordinated, in the most humiliating form, to dictation from Downing Street, London."

Let us first briefly review what has happened in Washington. During the special session of Congress and the beginning of this session, a number of bills for outright repeal

or amendment in line with Roosevelt's Chicago speech were introduced in the House. About six weeks ago a group of Congressmen petitioned the House Foreign Affairs Committee to hold public hearings on these measures. Representatives Scott and O'Connell discussed that petition in the pages of the NEW MASSES. Wide popular support for a full and open discussion of legislation for peace, based on the principles of concerted action and distinction between aggressors and their victims, made itself felt in Washington. There was strong evidence that the State Department and the President favored hearings in this session of Congress.

On Monday, March 21, the New York Times carried a scoop story in which it was stated that the hearings were definitely scheduled for March 29. On the following Friday the Times, again scooping all other papers, printed an interview with Chairman Sam D. McReynolds of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. It was officially announced that the hearings were off, irrevocably and finally. The official explanation—"unsettled and critical international situation." There was an implication that the State Department had changed Mr. McReynolds's mind.

The unsettled and critical international situation, climaxed by the rape of Austria, the ruthless German and Italian invasion of Spain, the murderous bombardments of civilians in Barcelona, the ultimatum to Lithuania, the threat to Czechoslovakia, and the menace of war everywhere—it was precisely this which convinced large numbers of Americans that hearings were imperative—now. Furthermore, Secretary Hull's speech before the National Press Club, which was broadcast to America and the world, carried an intimation that the State Department shared the popular view.

The Hull speech received an overwhelmingly favorable response, both in the press of the country and in the flood of mail and telegrams addressed to the White House and the State Department. This response confirmed the estimate of Paul G. McManus in a Washington dispatch in the March 22 issue of the NEW MASSES that isolationist sentiment had passed its peak. It was further confirmed at the conference for world economic coöperation of the National Peace Conference held in Washington over the past weekend. When the conference opened, it appeared as if the isolationists were firmly in the saddle. But the discussion that developed revealed that a majority of the delegates were actually in favor of some measure of collective efforts to maintain peace and of distinguishing between aggressors and the victims of aggression.

Why, in the face of all this, were the

hearings called off? And why does Secretary Hull, despite his own implied criticism of the Neutrality Act in his National Press Club speech, persist in defending the application of the act to the Spanish conflict, where its sole effect has been to aid the fascist invasion of Spain and to discriminate against a legal, democratic government? In the words of Raymond Leslie Buell, president of the Foreign Policy Association, "a policy of verbally inveighing against aggression, and yet in fact giving aid to aggressors, is wholly incomprehensible."

The peace-loving people of America cannot afford to permit this scuttling of the only genuine peace policy to go unchallenged. The hearings on the O'Connell Peace Bill and the Biermann, Scott, and Lewis resolutions must be held. Already letters and telegrams are pouring in on Secretary Hull and Chairman McReynolds. Delegations to Washington are being organized. There must be no pause in this campaign until it has won its objective. There is not much time to lose before the present Congress adjourns. If Congress goes home with the Neutrality Act still on the statute books, the United States will remain manacled through months of deepening international crisis to a policy which encourages and aids the fascist aggressors and directly threatens the peace of the United States.

Despite Wrecking and Treason

WORLD news last week revealed only one bright aspect of this tortured, blood-stained planet—and that is the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. On March 22, the New York Times reported the following items:

1. The Soviets showed a favorable foreign trade balance of more than \$77,000,000 for 1937—while the German export trade suffered a catastrophic decline, and the trade balance of Japan, Italy, and Poland remained conspicuously unfavorable.

2. The great bulk of Soviet exports in 1937 consisted not of the traditional Soviet exports—agricultural products and raw materials—but of industrial goods. As compared with last year, the exports of industrial goods this year increased by twenty million dollars. This is indicative of the change in Russia's economy. It is a new Russia that exports machines, shop equipment, automobiles, tractors, and automotive parts. Even the decline in Soviet oil exports from \$32,000,000 to \$30,000,000 is indicative of the same thing. The Soviets' rapid increase in the consumption of oil is owing to the rapidly increasing use of automobiles, tractors, etc.

3. Though the Soviet Union is still im-

porting a fair quantity of highly specialized machinery, by far the greater part of the complex machinery now being installed in Soviet plants is of domestic make. Altogether Soviet imports of machinery, ferrous metals, and chemical products have been drastically cut.

4. The U.S.S.R. has also greatly increased its exports of timber (from \$72,000,000 in 1936 to \$87,000,000 in 1937), cotton (from less than \$1,000,000 in 1936 to \$11,000,000), and grain (from \$7,000,000 in 1936 to \$51,000,000 in 1937). The points to note in this connection are, first, that despite the great increase in export of grain, Russia now is more abundantly fed than ever before in its history, and, second, that for many decades Russia used to import about half of its cotton; only a few years ago the slogan, cotton independence for the U.S.S.R., sounded exceedingly unrealistic; and that now the U.S.S.R. not only has ceased to import cotton, but is actually exporting it.

5. On March 27, the *Times* reported that this Spring the Soviet Union has "every reason to hope for another bumper crop—larger, perhaps, than last year's"; that "the building and improvement of Moscow proceeds apace. . . . One hears the noises of old buildings coming down and new ones going up day and night"; and that "Fifteen hundred new taxicabs, including two hundred big and handsome Soviet-made 'ZIS' cars, will be put into service in Moscow this year. Some began running this week."

Also, on March 27, a special cable to the *Daily Worker* reported: The turnout of the basic means of production in the Soviet Union for the month of January 1938 showed a rise of 7 percent compared to January-February last year. There was a rise in consumers' goods by 9.4 percent. The biggest increase was achieved in the food industry—14.7 percent for the two months. The canning industry plans to produce more than a billion cans of food this year, or 232,000,000 more than last year.

It turns out that both the reactionaries' crowing and the liberals' weeping over the "collapse of Soviet Communism" has been somewhat premature.

Life Betrays Its Readers

UP at *Life's* offices, Henry R. Luce, college playboy turned publisher with Morgan backing, meticulously selects the photographs that go into an issue of his picture magazine. *Life* is an impartial presentation of world affairs, because everyone knows that pictures do not lie.

And so, after much selection, the March 28 issue of *Life* gives us "Hitler Takes Austria." The rise of the Führer is pre-

sented graphically. It seems that Hitler—remember, pictures cannot lie—is quite a hero. The Germany of today is a nice place to live in, with wide military roads cutting across the spruce countryside. The Austrian populace hail Hitler enthusiastically. The Führer mourns silently over the grave of Horst Wessel, a manly looking chap in his brown shirt, so alert and fiery that he hardly suggests the pimp he was. The "other side" of the news is sandwiched into a spread of photographs showing persecuted Jews and royalists, and a poster denouncing "Marxist Jews." But this is made up for by a charming study of Herr Goebbels, smilingly reading to his two darling, light-haired kiddies.

All in all, Hitler proves to be a romantic figure. Almost as engaging as that other simple, pleasant fellow, Generalissimo Franco, who is seen clutching a tennis racket, surrounded by his cherished young ones, escorted by his colorful Moorish guards.

Mr. Luce did not have space to fit in photos of the bombing of Barcelona. Nor did he have the room to include shots of concentration camps in idyllic Germany, or a snapshot or two of an ersatz meal.

The pictures are impartial. So is the accompanying text. Horst Wessel is described as converting "a Communist prostitute to Nazism. . ." and as done to death "by a Communist pander." So they say in Berlin nowadays. But Wessel's Lucy or Mitzi (she had several names) was a prostitute who found the fascists her best friends and whose politics—when she got them—were not unnaturally Nazi. Wessel's assassin belonged to a pimp's club composed of Nazis. Mr. Luce decided to accept the official Nazi version of Wessel's martyrdom, a version necessitated by the paucity of Nazi heroes, which forced the Brown Shirts to elevate a pimp into a national hero.

The rest of *Life's* running comment is equally instructive. Franco is a professional soldier, distinguished by his tact and amiability. Hitler becomes a brave warrior, single-minded, mystical, "an Austrian dreamer wedded to Bismarckian Prussian philosophy." He will give Germany "economic self-sufficiency, work for every man, more babies."

Truly, Mr. Luce has made valiant use of photos. And still more valiant use of the text under them. At a time when the dispatches in even the reactionary press give some inkling of the horror of fascism, *Life* spreads before its two million readers the news that fascism is the idea of impassioned heroes for the improvement of mankind. *Life* endorses fascism while rigorously covering up its degradation and hunger; the torture and mass slaughter that accompany fascism's spread; the drive to war, which is fascism's goal.



NONE SHALL BE SILENT!

Marcella Broude

F O R S Y T H E ' S P A G E

A Life and Death Struggle

AT THIS time of year the fans keep their eyes on the spring training camps, because a great deal of the success of the teams during the season depends upon the rookies. The New York Yankees put great trust in Joe Gordon, the new second baseman who is replacing Tony Lazzeri. If he comes through it is difficult to see how the Bombers can be kept out of another pennant. So far his fielding has been spectacular, but his test will be whether he can hit major league pitching. If he doesn't, it will be a sad thing for Joe McCarthy.

At 10:15 tonight, almost exactly twenty-four hours after the first raid started, came the twelfth attack. It came after eight placid hours, during which Barcelona was able after a fashion to pull itself together again.

The Boston Red Sox are having an even harder time with Bobby Doerr, the nineteen-year-old wonder who came up last year from the Pacific Coast League and flopped badly in big time. This season Joe Cronin is trying him again at second in place of Eric McNair, who is holding out, and the sight is not pleasant to behold. In a recent game against the St. Louis Cardinals, Doerr struck out three times and seemed hopeless against a curve ball. I talked with a Boston writer who seemed genuinely depressed at the spectacle. "Why take it so hard," I said. "It's only a spring training game." "Take it hard," he replied bitterly. "If he's doing that now, what will he be doing in August? It just about ruins any chances we have."

7:40, 10:25, 1:55—those were tragic moments during the day. It was not necessary to send many planes each time. Fearful damage done in the last-mentioned raid required only five heavy bombers.

Over at Lakeland, where the Detroit Tigers are training, there is extreme interest in Mark Christman, the third baseman. It will be recalled that Detroit traded Gerald Walker and Marvin Owen last winter for Vernon Kennedy, Tony Piet, and Dixie Walker of the Chicago White Sox, and the howl was terrific. It gave the Tigers a good pitcher in Kennedy, but it weakened the outfield and necessitated the use of a new man at third base. Christman has been showing up well in practice, but there is no great confidence that he

will hold up against big time competition. Mickey Cochrane, the Detroit manager, is more or less on the spot. He is very nervous and a great worrier. Two years ago he suffered a nervous breakdown in the middle of the season. Last year he was almost killed when hit by a pitched ball. The writers are concerned about him now. "If the Tigers don't get off to a good start," said one of them, "it will be just too bad for old Mike. I'm worried to death about him."

One comes back from the scenes dazed: men, women, and children buried alive, screaming in the wreckage of their houses like trapped animals. I have never seen so many weeping women.

The St. Louis Cardinals seem weaker than they have been for years. They have traded Leo Durocher to Brooklyn and need a new shortstop. Don Gutteridge is trying to fill the spot now, with Art Garibaldi, a recruit, on third. Stu Martin is on second, which means that the Cards have a young infield capable of blowing up at a minute's notice. Paul Dean is through, and nobody knows if Dizzy Dean is to be the wonder of old. Another question mark is Enos Slaughter, champion hitter of the American Association, who is being used in right field by Manager Frisch. He seems to be very weak on curve balls. In short, Frankie is likely to grow gray hairs by the gobs before the season is over. It's a bad spot for the old Fordham Flash, and there is evidence that he knows it. The prospects are dark, but that will not keep the wolves in the bleachers from getting on him when the going gets rough.

The other was a 15-year-old boy. By some miracle he had not been crushed, although one could see from his hair down to his bare feet he had been completely buried. His body did not seem to have been hurt, but something else was, for he could not control his muscles—the twitching of his face, or shuddering.

The Phillies, of course, are hopeless. Whenever Jimmy Wilson develops a good player, the club sells him. The result is that the team goes from bad to worse. A money trade is no good at all to a manager; he can't use a certified check on first base. As a consequence, Wilson is a picture of sorrow from April to October. No matter how he tries,

his team gets nowhere. It would take a man of sterling character to be manager of the Phils year in and year out, and Wilson seems to be just that. He fights hard, he struggles, but in the end he is defeated. There is something noble and fine about Jimmy Wilson—almost a figure out of a great Greek tragedy.

But life must go on. They have been repairing car tracks and clearing wreckage. After each raid they do that. Then they wait for the next.

As for the Pittsburgh Pirates, they never seem to alter. Every year they look like the strongest team in the league on paper, and they begin folding up by June. This year their chief hope is one Rizzo, from the American Association and reputed to be a socker. If he socks curves no better than Slaughter, who was the batting leader in that league, he will be back in Columbus by the Fourth of July. There are a great many people who feel that Pie Traynor is too gentle a character for a manager. He doesn't drive the team, and the result is that he is himself almost driven insane by the Pittsburgh fans. In no sense can it be called a pleasant job. The situation will be tense there if the team is no better than last year.

Cardinal O'Connell of Boston called a lie the reports from Barcelona that thousands of civilians, men, women, and children had been killed and wounded by Franco's air bombers. "Franco is not that kind of a man," he said firmly.

Concerning bombardment of civilians, however, he said:

"War is war."

Charley Grimm of the Chicago Cubs is most definitely on the spot. Wrigley has hired Tony Lazzeri as coach, and there is a firm feeling that Lazzeri will have Grimm's job before the year is over. The only hitch may be that Gabby Hartnett will land the position, one he has been gunning at for a long time. All Grimm has to do is pick up to two .300 outfielders to play along with Demaree. If he fails—snick! Off comes his head. The general feeling that a big league manager has a life of Riley rather falls down when examined closely. In truth they have a difficult time. If they win, the credit is given to the players; if they lose, it is the manager's fault. Many a man's life has been shattered by this circumstance.

A chambermaid said to me this morning: "We are all going to be killed—all."

Ford Frick, president of the National League, said when interviewed: "It's going to be the greatest season we have ever known." Will Harridge, president of the American League, said: "... Greatest season in history. . . ." Charley Grimm of the Chicago Cubs said: "It's going to be a life and death struggle, but we'll do our best."

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

Punishment Under Socialism

By Ralph Winn

THE response of the bourgeois world to the recent Soviet trials has left much room for thought and a good deal of uneasiness. That the reactionary press seized avidly this opportunity to sling mud at the "Reds" is easily understood. There was nothing new or surprising in its crude hints at "internal unrest" and "an economic crisis," in its hysterical denunciation of Communist dictatorship, and even in its intimations of "some personal motives." Truth, honesty, and justice can hardly be expected from these quarters.

More regrettable is the attitude of the liberal press. Whereas we were accustomed in the past to meet here sympathetic curiosity about "the great Russian experiment"—and sentimentalism and vacillation, of course—now, after the trials, we observe unconcealed disappointment and sullen condemnation. As a result of this change of mind, we come more and more across the identification of Communism and fascism as two equally unacceptable forms of dictatorship, distinct only in their mutual enmity—all of which demonstrates that the liberals have never really understood the meaning of Socialism.

But what worries us most of all is the response of some young radicals, especially of those who have not yet fully made up their minds as to their exact political affiliation. These people feel that the trials cannot be unconditionally approved of; that they serve as a warning. Perplexed, they realize that it is difficult to meet the opponents' arguments—in short, they manifest weakness of heart and a temporary eclipse of intelligence. They do not comprehend that, having been brought up in a bourgeois environment, they merely reflect customary views on crime and punishment.

We all know that there is a good deal of corruption in this country. We realize that the "big shots" usually get away with theft (legalized, if possible), graft, fraud, treason, and even murder (by a professional proxy, for safety). Yet we are aroused when once in a decade some prominent politician, businessman, or financier is actually sent to prison. There have been so few precedents.

We are not aroused at all, however, when a poor wretch—and thousands of them—spends his days in jail for pilfering, vagrancy, or resisting the authorities. There is nothing sensational about that.

Is it not amazing that, in the whole history of our notoriously corrupt government, there were so few impeachments—hardly a score? Though these cases concerned treason, sedition, graft, theft, nepotism, etc., no less than half of them resulted in acquittal; and the other half of the culprits were removed from their respective offices. That was the whole extent of the punishment. It seems that we

practice more than Christian tolerance and mercy toward our ruling class. But when it comes to a poor worker, we have no compunction whatever to condemn him to the penitentiary or even to the gallows. And if he be a Negro, we hear excited voices, "He ought to be lynched."

This is equality as we understand it—a bourgeois equality. We are not accustomed to see rich people punished. This attitude is applied also to foreign countries, such as the Soviet Union, with a distinction: that we are neither acquainted with conditions prevailing there nor feel the guilt of men under Socialism. In accordance with habits inculcated for many generations, we would not worry about the trial of poor men. It is different when notables are tried. And when they are condemned to death, we are genuinely stupefied.

Something is clearly wrong with this attitude of mind, that implies a merciful deal toward the notables and a harsh deal toward the masses. To correct this attitude, we must ask ourselves the questions: Are our standards of justice right? Is there no alternative? Don't we mistake conventional thinking for truth? Does a common murderer, a victim of his environment as well as of his weakness, deserve to be hanged, while Mr. Hague, the notorious Mayor of Jersey City, deserves to go free? And what about our Falls and Thompsons and Insulls and Girdlers?

My conviction is that all our views on guilt and punishment are antiquated, distorted, contrary to common sense, intelligence, and social justice.

The justice of capitalist society has not yet outgrown the assumptions of primitive people. We punish *guilt*. Only under Socialism is a civilized conception of punishment practiced consistently. Criminals are penalized not so much for their guilt as for the *harm* they have done and for the bad example they have set. People are penalized for the sake of their fellow men, not to appease the wrath of God or of the state. It may be somewhat difficult, no doubt, to determine the precise meaning of "harm" in abstraction from concrete circumstances. In a historical setting, however, it is quite possible to define it in terms of *present* needs and aims of each country. Socialist justice has its feet firmly on the ground, and its eyes, contrary to those of bourgeois justice, are wide open.

It is necessary to add that in crime, guilt and harm are, of course, inseparable. Yet they are as far apart from each other as is the subject from the object—they are the two poles of criminality. Bourgeois justice sees misdemeanor in the light of guilt; Socialist justice takes the opposite standpoint and judges men and women in the light of social harm

(and usefulness). Whatever the individual attitude may be, the legal attitude toward theft, for instance, should be that it is not a transaction between two or more persons, but a crime against social interests. A murderer, from the same point of view, is not only an offender against an individual; in fact, he is penalized (or hospitalized) because his action implies danger to society, in fact and example.

The bourgeois jurist is not exactly ignorant of this approach to the problem. He recognizes the fact that no man acts entirely of his own "free will"; desires, motives, and the character itself of the criminal are conditioned and molded by his environment. The jurist acknowledges also the important implication of the following truth: that the criminal is, in a sense, as much a victim of his community as its members are his victims.

But even here bourgeois justice is unable to overcome its habitual emphasis on guilt—on a notion fitting admirably the individualism of our days. So if we ask the jurist as to the precise meaning of harm, his answer is likely to be: Why, the criminal is penalized for the harm done to the individuals he has offended, injured, murdered. Even if this jurist comprehends the uselessness of this retroactive act, the fact still remains that the bourgeois law is constructed on the principle of individualism.

Socialist justice, on the other hand, puts the problem of individuals into the background. What it is concerned with mainly is the harm done to society—for crime is never only a private relation; it involves, directly or indirectly, the entire community or even nation. Soviet legal writers are fully cognizant of this implication of Socialist justice. Any Soviet legal authority states: "The interest of the whole and the necessity to safeguard the social order should be the deciding factors in building up the judicial procedure." Another author states that the law must pursue "not only the judicial purposes, but also the general aims of the collective and the state, the working class as a whole, and must have the power to sacrifice the interest of the individual." Still another explains that "the penal policy consists . . . not in acquitting the toiler, or the poor or middle-class peasant, but in the clear understanding of the social danger of the act committed by the citizen brought to trial, appraised from the point of view of the interests of the proletariat as a whole."

While bourgeois justice grades crimes according to guilt and the harm done to the individual—murder being the vilest deed, as it deprives man of his dearest possession, of life itself—Socialist justice uses a different measuring rod: the degree of man's responsibility before society and of harm done to it. Consequently, the Soviet court does not hesi-

tate, under present conditions, to inflict capital punishment for the following crimes (which do not include murder): treason, espionage, sabotage, malicious disorganization of the transportation system (decree of January 1931), and similar anti-social offenses.

This transference of emphasis from guilt (and individual harm) to social harm leads inevitably to the distinction between quality and quantity of anti-social behavior. Bourgeois justice judges human conduct solely by the quality of criminal action in the abstract. Lying is a fault; dishonesty is a little worse; theft is quite bad; fraud is still worse; and murder is the wickedest deed of all. But what about social implications of behavior, their causes and effect? Our judges seem to be totally ignorant of, or indifferent to, such facts; their guide is the letter of statutes, where human beings and conditions do not figure at all. Only occasionally, in search of extenuating circumstances, do they consult the causes (serving as extenuation in direct proportion to the defendant's income) and the effects of crime (on the judge's own career). Does all this mean that it is irrelevant and immaterial whether theft, for instance, has been committed by a hungry unemployed or by the governor of a large state? It appears that such considerations do not matter here at all, except that the latter is able to hire a better and more expensive lawyer to defend his case, except that he has ways and means to appeal an unfavorable decision in a succession of courts, except that the judge and the jury are more inclined to be lenient to a "respectable citizen" than to a poor wretch, except that there are countless devices of circumventing the laws or of making a crime "legal"—all available to the governor in question.

Socialist justice, on the other hand, does not apply the identical qualitative standards of law to the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the man bearing high responsibility and the fellow with hardly any social responsibility at all. It does take the position and public function of the criminal into consideration. It does pay attention to causes of one's behavior and to effects of an act upon public welfare. In short, it evaluates the gravity of each criminal act according to its quality (differentiation among lying, dishonesty, theft, fraud, murder, etc.), but also and mainly according to its quantitative side—the amount of resulting social harm. It contends that the harm done by a noted person in a position of high responsibility is by far greater than the harm done by a simple worker. It asserts that a man-in-the-street is less guilty than an official convicted of the identical kind of crime. It maintains that an unjust judge or a corrupt commissar does more wrong than an unjust carpenter or a corrupt tailor.

Why does bourgeois justice disregard the quantitative side of crime? Simply because it prefers to pass in silence the implication that the richer, more powerful, and noted

persons carry a greater responsibility before society than ordinary people. After all, it is bourgeois justice: it works for the benefit of the ruling class. And it has no intention to turn its condemnation against members of its own class, except when it is imperative for self-protection.

We habitually claim (because we had been taught from infancy to do so) that bourgeois justice is built on the principle of equality of all citizens before the law. This is true, perhaps, only in the sense of Anatole France's saying: "The law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread." The proverbial equality of citizens before the law is sheer sham and mockery. A little acquaintance with our courts confirms this accusation. All intelligent and observant people know this in their hearts. Jonathan Swift expressed a commonplace thought when he wrote: "Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through." Bourgeois justice demonstrates anything but equal treatment of people in its attitude to such persons as Huey Long and Tom Mooney, Gerard Swope and Angelo Herndon, Henry Ford and Sacco or Vanzetti.

Clarence Darrow once said that "most people are sent to jail because they are poor." And he was right. The institution of justice under capitalism is a creation of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich. Its servants are under supervision of special interests and are promoted according to their usefulness to the ruling class. The lawyers are trained to sell their services to the highest bidder rather than to assist administration of true justice. The legislators are, by and large, pawns of capital. Powerful lobbies are installed to safeguard still further the interests of private property. Just witness the whole machinery of election at work. Remember the money spent on these elections and don't forget the indirect influence of big business, the Republican Party, the American Liberty League, Ku Klux Klan, and also of individual industrialists and financiers. Law and administration of justice, with their stress on private property, are clearly made to serve and protect the rich. Even Adam Smith remarked in his *Wealth of Nations*:

Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is, in reality, instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have property against those who have none at all.

Apart from their sinister influence upon the framing and administration of laws, the wealthy put themselves into a privileged position before justice by virtue of their possessions. Indeed, can a poor man secure divorce with the same facility as a banker? Can a worker hire a good lawyer to cut his taxes to a minimum—or to evade the payment? Does a farmer know how to appeal to a higher court? how to prejudice a jury? how to find justice in a good sense of the word, to say nothing of a

bad sense? Does a financier get the same treatment as a poor man in the traffic court?

Anybody who observes the actual processes of our law—as it is being framed and as it is being dispensed—knows full well that it is always hard to pass a law favorable to the workers and other underprivileged people, and that it is even harder to repeal a law profitable to special interests. Rather than believe in the false saying that everybody is equal before the law of our country, we must confess that facts do not permit us to arrive at any other conclusion than that the law of the rich cannot be just to the masses.

Socialist justice, on the other hand, practices and defends that equality which bourgeois justice so hypocritically claims for its own. Have you ever heard, indeed, of persecution of the Jews, Negroes, or Tartars in the Soviet Union? Could you find there a trace of discrimination against women? Haven't you read that the Party members—allegedly a privileged class—are penalized for crime not less but *more* than ordinary citizens—quite consistently with the principle of quantity of social harm?

And because some of the responsible members of the Soviet government are condemned to death, many of us are shocked. What do you propose to do with criminals in the higher positions? Permit them to continue their abuses, the way our governors, senators, assemblymen, mayors, and chiefs of every sort do? Or the way our Mellons, Rockefellers, Morgans, Fords, DuPonts, Insulls, Dohenys, Falls, Hearsts, Girdlers, Rands, Hagues help them to do? That Socialist justice strikes a painful note of discord with our obsolescent traditions, is natural and inevitable. That bourgeois justice is corrupt, hypocritical, and socially harmful is beyond question.

We must comprehend that, under bourgeois justice, a high position is generally taken as an opportunity for personal enrichment or for other advantages, whereas a similar position, under Socialism, is regarded as a social responsibility. If you attain a high position here, you are on the safe side of the law (you make it, change it, pervert it, abuse it); but if you accept a high office in the Soviet Union, you must beware of transgressing the law: for it gives you not only honor and hard work, but also a great responsibility. If you do not carry it fairly and squarely, it is just too bad.

And that is exactly what we need here, too. Rhetoric exercises on the necessity of respect for law and government will not help. Increase of budgets for crime prevention campaigns will probably lead to a further abuse of laws on all sides. Modifications of, and amendments to, existing laws will produce only additional complications. Only a systematic and organized revision of the very foundations of justice, in the light of *social* interests, can remedy the situation. There is no other road to exterminating corruption, graft, oppression, exploitation, racial prejudice. We need Socialism to learn the meaning of justice.

They Won in Puerto Rico

By E. M. Ellsworth

THE people of Puerto Rico have learned much from the longshoremen's strike of January-February 1938. For the first time in its history, their island has known a complete blockade. Not a pound or package of cargo was unloaded in a single one of its many ports for a period of forty-one days. The solidarity of longshoremen and sailors proved to be a more effective force than the fleets and cannon of those famous captains of Queen Elizabeth who harassed the Spanish Main. What is more to the point, the Puerto Rican people have seen that a coordinated strike of disciplined workers can succeed exactly where "Nationalist" terroristic tactics failed, and that Governor Winship can be stopped.

It is seven o'clock in the morning of the twenty-fourth day of the strike. As the day is Thursday, the *Borinquen*, flagship of the New York & Porto Rico Steamship Co., is at her usual berth in the San Antonio docks waiting to sail at her regular hour in the afternoon. She is to carry passengers and mail only. All is quiet along the piers and bulkheads of the mile-long waterfront, just as on the previous mornings of the strike. But at the San Antonio docks there is something unusual; the heavy steel gates at the entrance are closed, and two police captains stand guard before them, taking special care as to who shall pass. Inside the gates, on the company property, there is a much larger force of heavily armed police than have been there before. Further inside, near the shed, are several trucks and automobiles which the police have allowed to pass. The trucks are loaded with crates of cucumbers, and the group of men standing by are cucumber growers with their chauffeurs and peons.

When members of the crew of the *Borinquen* observe that this group of men begin to unload the crates from the trucks and also prepare to discharge the pre-cooling plant where other hundreds of crates of cucumbers have been stored awaiting shipment, they realize that something is in the wind. They waste no time in sending a message ashore. And when Fred Myers (the vice-president of the National Maritime Union sent to Puerto Rico by the C.I.O. to help in the strike) receives their message at his hotel, he wastes no time in getting down to the San Antonio docks. The police officials, believing him to be a member of the crew, allow him to pass in. On board the *Borinquen*, Myers almost immediately encounters the federal attorney, Cecil Snyder, with five deputy marshals. Snyder greets Myers with rather more surprise than pleasure and suggests that they have a talk with the captain. In the captain's cabin, Snyder opens the conversation.

Snyder: I am here to see that the law is carried out, Captain.

Myers: I am an American citizen, the men of your crew are American citizens, Captain. We are just as anxious as the federal attorney to see the law carried out. After all, we help make the laws, don't we?

Snyder: Now, Captain Evans, if you give these men of your crew an order, will they carry it out?

Captain: I might give an order, but Mr. Myers might give a different order.

Myers: Captain, the crew recognizes you as master of this ship, and will carry out all orders given by you in that capacity.

Captain: Very well.

The captain calls the mate and gives his orders. Myers, followed closely by Snyder, goes down to the promenade deck, where the mate proceeds to call a general ship's meeting at which he instructs the crew to place the hatches on No. 2 lower hold and to open side ports on No. 2 between decks in preparation for loading cargo. The crew obeys these orders. But inside the open ports they maintain their picket line. Ashore the cucumber growers have the skids and conveyors ready, and are all set to begin loading. Close by are twenty-five or thirty of the Insular Police in two detachments with carbines and machine-guns commanding the scene of operations.

At this juncture, Myers and Snyder, following the ship's delegate, return to the captain's cabin. There the delegate informs the captain that the presence of scabs aboard the ship, and the placing of scab cargo, would endanger the lives of the passengers as well as their own lives and would threaten the safety of the ship. Further, he states that the crew will have to ask to be paid off in case any loading is attempted. He advises that the captain inform the company of the decision of the crew. With no more discussion, the captain goes immediately ashore to consult the local company officials, who in turn call their chiefs in New York by telephone.

In about an hour, the captain returns aboard and informs the crew that no cargo will be loaded. An order is given to close the side ports. When this order is carried out, and all is squared away on the ship, Myers decides to go ashore.

He is alone as he walks along the pier and turns through the alley-way between the shed and the pre-cooling plant toward the gates. Here the cucumber growers and their peons are waiting. As Myers walks by them, they attack him without warning. The first assailant misses his swing and Myers (five feet six—one hundred and twenty-five pounds) knocks him down with a blow to the jaw, but from the other side another grower (six feet—one hundred and eighty-five pounds—fascist

sympathizer) lands a heavy blow to the face which drops Myers to the cement. As he struggles to his feet again, someone swings a knife. He dodges just in time but the knife grazes his eye, drawing blood. As another heavy blow knocks him down again, kicks rain upon him from all sides. Before he is completely done in, he manages, "by some sort of miracle," to lunge on his hands and knees between the legs of his attackers back toward the ship. Now the police arrive at the scene at last from their positions a few yards away. While only one of them makes any real attempt to shield Myers, it is enough to enable him to escape. As he looks up, half blinded and with his head ringing from the blows, the very first thing he notices is the crew of the *Borinquen* on their way ashore to his defence. Quickly he waves them back to the ship, and the sailors understand and obey.

THE news spreads like wildfire along the waterfront. Messages begin to come from other ships, from the *Corozal*, at the other side of the San Antonio docks, from the militant 100-percent N.M.U. crew of the Grace Line ship *Santa Paula*, offering their full force in defence. Myers, now safe on the *Borinquen*, has the same answer for them all, to stay aboard and keep calm.

As the news passes from shack to shack in the longshoremen's crowded shanty-town nearby (one of the sorest slum areas of the western hemisphere) thousands of angry and determined men crowd outside the San Antonio docks. There is tension and menace in the air while a heavy guard of police transport the assailants of Myers to the police station. Then Myers himself appears with a sailor of the *Borinquen* at his side as he limps across the now deserted dock area toward the gates. His first job is to visit strike headquarters and to caution firmness, steadiness, and discipline in the ranks, before he consents to be taken to the hospital.

Fifteen minutes after the attack on Myers, the news is flashed by radio to New York. A few minutes later, it is flashed up and down the Atlantic coast. An hour later, messages from N.M.U. ships are being placed on the desk of President Roosevelt in Washington. A protest demonstration of solidarity is considered.

Then Washington calls Governor Winship on the telephone. The call lasts considerably more than three minutes. Winship, the ex-general, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the island, is on the carpet. Undoubtedly he hears some straight talk with some specific instructions.

The heavily armed police reinforcements are removed from the San Antonio docks.

The *Borinquen* sails for New York on schedule, with passengers and mail *only*. The hard lines in the faces of sailors and longshoremen begin to relax. The tension gradually slackens. All is quiet again along the waterfront.

SUCH, in brief outline, were the events of the 27th of January, 1938, an important day for the N.M.U., for the C.I.O., for the striking longshoremen, for the island labor movement, for the whole people of Puerto Rico.

Now for the implications of these events. For the first twenty-two days of the strike, Menendez Ramos, Commissioner of Agriculture, was obliged to act as the chief executive, due first to the absence and later to the illness of Governor Winship. From the start, pressure was brought to bear, of course, on the Acting-Governor: by the vociferous Chamber of Commerce, by the dominating sugar interests, by the reactionary elements of his own Republican Party, by the Association of Farmers, in the interest of the fruit and vegetable growers, as well as by the shipping companies themselves. As the strike, to the amazement of everybody, continued day after day 100-percent effective, and with no strikebreakers used for the first time in the history of the island, the pressure was so increased that Menendez Ramos, badly flustered, began to think and talk of declaring an emergency and calling out the National Guard to unload the ships.

Just here, however, the Insular Attorney-General, Fernandez Garcia (a progressive appointed from Washington over Winship's opposition), threw a monkey wrench into the works. He made a public statement to the effect that in the existing situation the executive had no authority under the law in taking

the contemplated drastic action. So the pressure on Menendez Ramos resulted only in sputtering for the moment.

A few days later, General Winship was able to leave the hospital and return to the governor's palace and his executive duties. The strike was now in its fourth week. All sorts of rumors were circulating: the gasoline reserves were almost exhausted, the food supplies could last only five days more, the hospital supplies were almost gone. The big business interests were becoming almost hysterical in their demands for the firm hand of the government.

Then the long awaited action at last! General Winship presents an ultimatum. He will give the strikers and the shipping companies forty-eight hours to compose their differences! A huge sigh of relief from the Chamber of Commerce!

But before the first twenty-four hours had elapsed it was perfectly evident from the re-

★ ★ ★

Invasion

We motored east over America

It was spring: black earth was upsurging

In plowed fields of Ohio

Dawn poised us on Tuscarora Mountain

We looked heartleaping across blue-checked fields; inner valleys of Pennsylvania:

On up: into piled Alleghenies: soared among white rain-clouds.

There was more patriotism here in American earth, we said,

Than in a thousand Liberty Leaguers—

Here Washington sighted his rifle: Braddock fled:

Lee north against Harrisburg, Yankees plundering Shenandoah—

At dusk we fought Gettysburg again: rifles blasted the gray slope against Pickett's Charge:

Hands thrilled to memories, ancestral bayonet-lunges!

We love our land: Ohio, Pennsylvania

All American horizons names of towns American speechways

We said: let no foreign soldiers ever dare invade our land:

We'd fight till death: we'd leave a corpse in every furrow

We grounded rifles: prone in mother-soil we'd sight our guns: try to gouge with bayonets through us!

And yet we passed sad mining-shacks: starvation faces: broken panes:

We saw youth-faces: blood-kin of ours:

American folk adrift upon the roads

Deep among the factories railway networks bridges wharves

We ran into the slums for endless miles

Slowrotting into earth: we smelled charity stations: inside

American folk in clustered abject reeking swamps.

One of us said: he didn't talk so much:

American revolutions burned within his blood—

Rebels and British and Iroquois, his fathers fought them all:

He grinned: but tears were in his voice: he said

Our nation is invaded: the Tories hold our land—

Like Daniel Boone, his hand's instinctive curve already to a gun!

H. W.

calcitrant attitude of the representatives of the companies that a settlement was impossible.

During all that first day and late into the night, there must have been feverish activity in the offices of Charles Hartzell, the attorney of the New York & Porto Rico Steamship Co. For the plan being evolved, there was collaboration with the insular government, with the federal attorney, with the representatives of the cucumber growers, with the shipping lobby in Washington, all to be arranged.

When the sun rose on January 27, the last day of the ultimatum, everything was prepared—the trap was set. At all the entrances to the San Antonio docks, the police reinforcements were ready with their machine guns (possibly some of the same used in the Ponce massacre). Inside the defended gates, the cucumber growers with their peons were ready to begin loading. Aboard the *Borinquen* the federal attorney with five deputy marshals was ready to make arrests. Fifteen hundred miles away in Washington, at the Senate investigation of the alleged insubordination of American seamen, the steamship operators were ready to strike a body blow at the N.M.U. Another *Algic* affair for their Senator Copeland to "investigate," and the "good old days" might be here again.

But something went wrong. The bait was taken, but the trap wasn't sprung! "Blacky" Myers, bantamweight sailor, one against forty in the ring, was knocked down, but never for the count. Bruised, beaten, and bleeding, he still retained the unfailing wit and courage which have made him a leader in the most militant sector of the American labor movement. The provocation missed fire. The discipline and responsibility of the American seamen prevented a pitched battle and a spilling of blood on the San Juan waterfront that might have made Winship's Ponce massacre look like a minor skirmish. It was so close it wasn't funny.

THE next morning, with the forty-eight hours now elapsed, big business looked in vain for heartening words of command (to labor) from the governor's palace. Instead they found only a weak, threatless appeal to both sides to arbitrate their differences. What was this—Winship, the ex-general, the strong man, the governor who suppressed opposition and protest with the iron hand of his militarized police, now meek and gentle as a lamb. It was a bitter pill for the Chamber of Commerce, but a victory to celebrate for the people of Puerto Rico.

The 100-percent effective strike of forty-one days and the winning of important concessions from the shipping companies were no small achievements of the island longshoremen. The first demonstration in a major strike of complete solidarity and coordination between the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. was a significant milestone for the American labor movement. But the stopping of General Winship by the united front of American and Puerto Rican workers was perhaps the most satisfying part of the whole victory.

READERS' FORUM

Bliven and Browder

TO THE NEW MASSES:

SINCE the correspondence given below, the *New Republic* has gone over openly to the Chamberlain line (Mar. 30 issue) by advocating rapprochement with Hitler without political conditions. This is a logical follow-up of the letter to *The American Mercury*.
EARL BROWDER.

March 4, 1938

Dear Mr. Browder:

It seems to me that you were very unfair in your reference to me in the NEW MASSES of March 8. You say "Thus Trotskyites boldly collaborate in the fascist *American Mercury*, and Bruce Bliven writes them 'explanatory' letters."

I have written just one letter to the *American Mercury*. They accused me of being a Communist, and I replied defending myself from that charge. Your insinuation that this is an act of friendship on my part toward the *American Mercury* is either an extraordinary piece of muddlement, or something worse. What would you have had me do? Permit their long attack upon me, in an article, to go unchallenged?

Sincerely,
(Signed) Bruce Bliven.

March 8, 1938

Dear Mr. Bliven:

Upon returning to the city I find your letter of March 4. First of all I must apologize for having spoken of your letter to the *American Mercury* in the same sentence with the reference to the Trotskyist collaboration with that organ. This inclusion of the two matters in that single sentence was wrong because it could be misinterpreted that I was trying to directly connect you with the Trotskyites. Accept my apologies for this mistake.

I must, however, say that the reference to your letter, if separated from its direct context with reference to the Trotskyites, was in order and must stand. The very fact that you considered it necessary to defend yourself from a charge of the fascist *American Mercury* that you are a Communist and to defend yourself in an explanatory letter to that publication gave some justification for the *Mercury's* exultant comments that their charges against you had born good fruit, inasmuch as it had brought you into the international anti-Communist pact. I did not insinuate that this was an act of friendship upon your part to the *American Mercury*. I was pointing out that it was a step toward capitulation to the *American Mercury*. The *American Mercury* itself so greeted it, and you did not consider this important enough to make a public statement on.

In conclusion, let me assure you that I have not the slightest desire to develop unnecessary differences. In the past period, before the sharpening of the issues of isolation, I had considered the *New Republic* representative of some of the healthier elements in the non-Communist left circles. It has been a great disappointment to me to see the *New Republic*, under your leadership, break down so completely on this issue.

Sincerely,
(Signed) Earl Browder.

Is "The Tablet" Anti-Semitic?

TO THE NEW MASSES:

IN REFERENCE to your editorial entitled "Is *The Tablet* anti-Semitic?" I wish to make these five observations:

1. *The Tablet* is not pro-fascist. It is anti-fascist

and has said so dozens of times. We are anti-Nazi, anti-fascist, anti-Communist.

2. Father Curran is not and never was editor or a member of the editorial staff of *The Tablet*.

3. *The Tablet* has heard from its readers in reference to its criticism of Sirovich. Our Christian and Jewish friends have highly extolled the article. Not one word of adverse comment was received. A prominent Jew writes: "You do a great service to Judaism in denouncing men like Sirovich, who misrepresent us and indirectly give the Nazis fodder for their campaigns."

4. We are told Sirovich regrets his unfortunate speech.

5. We are not anti-Semitic. You are the first one we ever heard make such a charge.

PATRICK F. SCANLAN, Managing Editor.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

We Reply

We regret that Mr. Scanlon has seen fit to ignore the basis of our criticism. *The Tablet's* attack upon Congressman Sirovich ended with this sentence: "The Jewish people have in them serious liabilities, liabilities far more menacing in possibilities than the disgusting Bunds, and this to their own public prestige." This constitutes an indictment of a whole people entirely similar in effect to the attacks of a Goebbels and a Streicher. To add insult to injury, *The Tablet* compared the Jewish people to the "disgusting Bunds" and found the former "far more menacing." If *The Tablet* is anti-fascist, as Mr. Scanlon claims, some readjustment ought speedily to be made in its editorial policy, for *The Tablet* has been a fiery supporter of the Franco forces in Spain. We do not know whether Mr. Sirovich regrets his speech; if he does, that is irrelevant to the issue. We are not the first to sense anti-Semitism in the editorial in question, which was sent to us by a Catholic reader of *The Tablet*.

THE EDITORS.

Writers' Support for Spain

TO THE NEW MASSES:

SIX ambulances for Spain was the contribution of American and foreign writers whose manuscripts were auctioned by the League of American Writers at the Barbizon-Plaza on the night of March 25. Over two hundred manuscripts, working notes, and autographed letters brought a total of \$6,000, which was turned over to the Medical Bureau of the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy.

The first few rows of seats in the crowded ballroom of the hotel were occupied by stony-faced dealers, who apparently were determined not to have their bidding influenced by any consideration other than market value. But as the evening wore on they became affected by the enthusiasm aroused by speeches of exiled Ernst Toller, Jean Muir, Lionel Stander, Orson Welles, and others who acted as auctioneers, and the bidding reflected the spirit in which the auction was held and in which writers from all over the world sent in their manuscripts to be sold for Spain.

But the dealers had their bargains, too. The holograph manuscript of *Das Schwallenbuch*, the story of two swallows which nested in Ernst Toller's prison cell, and the publication of which brought him a second prison term, was sold for only \$50. The 726-page manuscript of *What Are We to Do?* by John Strachey, which has not yet been published, brought only \$75, and part of the manuscript of the Clifford Odets play, *Golden Boy*, was knocked down to \$41. Other bargains were the manuscript of Leane Zugsmith's *Time to Remember*, for \$45, and Grace Lumpkin's *A Sign for Cain*, \$15.

The highest bid was that of \$800 for the manuscript of *The Flowering of New England*, by Van Wyck Brooks. The script of a play, *Bimbo, the Pirate*, brought \$200, partly because it was the only

manuscript ever permitted to be sold by Booth Tarkington. For three Ernest Hemingway items \$445 was paid, while the manuscript of the novel *Lean Men*, by Ralph Bates, was sold for \$110.

The bidding became satirical when the manuscript of *Hearst, Lord of San Simeon*, by Ernest Sutherland Bates and Oliver Carlson, was put up for sale. After a few preliminary hisses there was a bid of \$17.76. The next offer was \$18.12, and the item was sold for \$19.38.

Marc Blitzstein played and sang parts from "The Cradle Will Rock" as a bonus when the script of the libretto of that play was auctioned, and \$120 was paid. Nearly everything in sight was sold to the loyalist sympathizers, even several catalogues of the auction, autographed by prominent writers present, which brought \$15 each.

As soon as announcement of the auction was made several months ago every mail brought to the League offices at 381 Fourth Avenue manuscripts and letters from writers everywhere eager to contribute their work for the sale, and so large was the number of items assembled by Marjorie Fischer, chairman of the sale committee, that the auction was not completed until three o'clock in the morning. It was a historic manuscript sale in that it revealed the general support, by writers of such diverse shades of opinion, of the cause of Spanish democracy.

EDWIN LANHAM.

Jitters in the A.M.A.

TO THE NEW MASSES:

THE recently published declaration of principles proposed by the Committee of Physicians, and signed by 430 prominent medical men, represents the first timid and rather conservative steps taken by a small segment of the profession in the direction of cooperation with the lay public and the government in efforts to provide decent medical care for the American people. In the eyes of the leaders of the American Medical Association, however, these proposals loom as something revolutionary and radical—with capital R's. And so the pages of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* have been resounding of late with fulminations and dire prophecies to the effect that federal subsidies mean federal control, and federal control means the end of medicine in the United States.

It is interesting to compare this attitude of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the dangers of government interference in medicine with its reaction in a recent case of brutally frank interference in the administration of one of our great medical centers.

I refer to the incident that occurred at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, in the spring of 1935, when several students, instructors, and technicians were expelled for attempting to organize a peace society. The dean quite frankly told these people that his action was forced by the pressure of wealthy alumni. In substantiation, he quoted letters which threatened to discontinue contributions to the University until all pacifists were expelled.

The whole affair was thoroughly aired in the press, and several newspapers commented editorially. The *Journal of the American Medical Association*, however, apparently, did not see any cause for concern or comment.

The present preoccupation of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* with questions of academic freedom, etc., would ring more true if it had shown similar zeal in the past. As it is, one suspects that what's really disturbing the leaders of the A.M.A. is the danger to their lucrative practices that they fear is implied in an extension of public health services. In this they do not represent the interests and wishes of the average practitioner, who is struggling to get along, and who would benefit greatly by a system that would enable millions more of our people to avail themselves of his services.

Brooklyn, New York.

A. L. GOLD.

BOOK REVIEWS

Machine Battler

THE PASQUIER CHRONICLES, by Georges Duhamel. Translated from the French by Beatrice de Holthoir. Henry Holt and Company. \$3.50.

M. DUHAMEL's novel sequence, which herewith becomes available in a volume of 848 closely printed English pages, is something of a hybrid, representing an attempted fusion of at least three types of novel that we have known in recent years: the novelized autobiography, which has been with us for some time; the moribund novel of French family life; and the novel which, like Jules Romains' *Men of Good Will* or Roger Martin du Gard's *Les Thibault*, is intended as the "portrait of a society," though it might be more accurate to say, the portrait of a generation.

The autobiographic note, one of senile reminiscence, is struck at the beginning of the *Chronicles* and is sustained throughout, the entire work being suffused in a mist of gentle Dickensian whimsy—which is probably the reason why Mr. J. B. Priestley likes it so well ("one of the best things France has sent us!")—a whimsy that is variegated now by the querulousness of age and now by a tone of saddened remonstrance with the world of human beings as they are; for as Ilya Ehrenbourg has observed, in a witty essay on Duhamel, the latter became a grandfather too early in life, and grumbling with him began at forty.

The reader, then, is by no means to assume that M. Duhamel is creating his elderly Laurent out of the virgin web of imagination: what he is doing is to recreate M. Duhamel, the Duhamel who stops his ears at the sound of his neighbor's radio, who shudders at the smell of gasoline from his neighbor's garage, and who looks upon factory workers as "automatons," so stupid as to revolt, not against the machine that enslaves them, but against the boss—as if he were to blame! In other words, this is the same Don Quixote who has set out to do battle with the modern machine, and who, following a visit to America a decade or so ago, was led to perpetrate one of the silliest and most dishonest books of the century.

In *The Pasquier Chronicles* the 54-year-old "machine-battler," to lift Ehrenbourg's fine phrase, turns back to the lavender-scented Nineties of his youth, and carries the tale down through the crowning disillusionment of the World War. In this sense, Duhamel, like Romains or Roger Martin du Gard, may be said to be doing his own highly subjective portrait of the pre-War generation (Louis Aragon also attempted a picture within the compass of a single volume, in his *The Bells of Basel*). The social note comes out most clearly in the



Tom Funk

concluding book, "The House in the Desert," which is obviously woven around the experiences of the early century Abbaye group, composed of Vildrac, Romains, Duhamel, Durtain, and other *Unanimistes*.

The thing, however, that lies like an incubus on M. Duhamel's spirit is the family, or, as he is fond of calling it, "the clan." It is the family and the bitter taste it leaves that mars the honey of youthful recollections, its shadow falling between to destroy the glow of childhood and tarnish the dreams of adolescence. It is not merely the "terrible" and terribly funny Papa Pasquier, or the materialist brother, Joseph, who somehow always succeeds in discomfiting the idealistic Laurent; it is the whole mesh of family relationships which, at the close of Book Three, proves too much for the hero and impels him to flee it all.

Here, as has been hinted above, M. Duhamel is simply contributing his bit to that novelistic treatment of the family, which ranges from François Mauriac to Guy Mazeline. And no more than any of the others does he appear to suspect where the root of the evil lies: in the fact that the family in question is the bourgeois family. For is it not "money worries" that lie behind all the bickerings and dickerings of the Pasquiers, from beginning to end? *The Communist Manifesto* really ought to be required reading for all novelists who undertake to portray the modern family in a capitalist society; and the writers might be platitudinously reminded that a river cannot rise higher than its source.

In the socially broadened last book the motive is that of the intellectual's flight from the world and his disillusioned return. The theme is the futility of all Brook Farm experiments, a theme that Hawthorne dealt with more than eighty years ago, in *The Blithedale Romance*. Once again, the great Marx-Engels classic may be recommended. "Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property . . . determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class." To which M. Duhamel would doubtless reply by stressing the distinction made by his character, Victor Legrand, between the "bourgeoisie of money" and that other "cultivated bourgeoisie," that "enlightened bourgeoisie," that indispensable "élite" which is "the strength and glory of a country." But it just happens that, as *The Communist Manifesto* points out, the distinction cannot be made.

Justin Weill, the poetic Jew and Laurent's lifelong friend, brings the work to a close by saying: "We are intellectuals, people like us, which means that we are obstreperous and difficult. This failure of ours doesn't really prove anything for other more normal men."

Which sounds as if there might be some hope for M. Duhamel after all. In his case, it is almost too intelligent to be true. It all depends, of course, on what is meant by "normal."

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

The Great Compromise

HELEN'S TOWER, by Harold Nicolson. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$3.50.

IN this particular era of history our interest in the mental habits of the British ruling class is naturally intense. When the definitive Marxian study of England is written, it will have to be largely concerned with what might be called the great compromise. How did it happen that the large landowners, once political power had been wrested from them, became not merely the allies but the servants of the industrialists and financiers who superseded them? How did it come about that the British nobility went into the business of raising its sons to become the instruments of imperial policy? And why, since we are asking questions, did the gentlemen of title develop into such magnificent and conscienceless administrators?

Lord Dufferin, son of the solid Blackwoods and the brilliant Sheridans, went to Eton and Oxford, where he developed an ascetic interest in religion and a romantic attachment to the works and the ideas of Sir Walter Scott. Out of this unlikely material was forged a Governor General of Canada and a Viceroy of

India, as well as an Ambassador to Russia, Italy, and France. He bested France in Syria in 1861, helped to unify Canada and attach it more strongly to the Empire, laid British hands on Egypt in 1882, and annexed Burmah in 1886. He died in 1902, full of honors, richly deserved.

What happened? I have looked carefully in *Helen's Tower* for an answer, and I cannot find one. Mr. Nicolson says that his uncle was ambitious, and points out that, at the age of forty, he had done little toward the fulfillment of his ambitions. Was it this that made him take such sharp advantage of the opportunities that were finally offered him? I do not know. I doubt if his achievements were quite so much the result of innocence, good luck, and self-righteousness as Nicolson intimates. It is, of course, true that Dufferin had a deep respect for money and, to say the least, a somewhat ingenuous notion of how it might be obtained. No one can doubt that his part in the Whitaker Wright scandal was perfectly honorable, but his faith in Mr. Wright seems a little naïve and perhaps a little greedy. It is also true that his belief in the Empire was so deep-seated that its growth, by almost any methods, could be sanctified on the most purely idealistic grounds. But skepticism persists. The British aristocrat-administrator is too smart when smartness pays for us to believe whole-heartedly in his stupidity the rest of the time.

Mr. Nicolson sees the problem, I think, but he does not grapple with it. Instead, he has written a charming book, in which his childhood memories of his uncle are ingeniously and amusingly combined with a record of Dufferin's career. So far as Nicolson himself is con-

cerned, the book is brilliantly evocative, and once more he shows himself to be an epigrammatist and a raconteur of the highest order. But I could have spared a little of the charm for a trifle more insight. Mr. Nicolson, the son as well as the nephew of a diplomat, and a diplomat himself, could have told us more than he does. It may be that he is too close to the ruling class to see it clearly, or—and I find this more likely—perhaps he is too close to it to talk about it freely.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Promise System

THE PROMISES MEN LIVE BY: *A New Approach to Economics*, by Harry Scherman. Random House, \$3.

GOVERNMENT hearings in Washington have shown that businessmen are notoriously ignorant even of the rudiments of economics. When deprived of their economic stooges, they do nothing more than repeat the most stupid platitudes of financial editors. Occasionally, however, one of the boys tries his hand at explaining the ills of the world, usually with the assistance of an underpaid ghost writer. Then no matter how shallow or reactionary the book may be, most of the professional reviewers will be certain to go off the deep end and hail the profundity of the practical businessman—so unlike the sophistries of the Marxists.

The book under review is a case in point.

At the present time when a new economic crisis is ravaging the United States, when Wall Street is deliberately aggravating every factor making for economic catastrophe, we are given this newest revelation, which sees and explains all. Mr. Harry Scherman, the head of the Book-of-the-Month Club, has by his own admission, after twenty-five years of contemplation, solved the riddle of economics. Through the bold use of "imagination," he has cleared up "a very large part of the apparent disorder and mystification in human events."

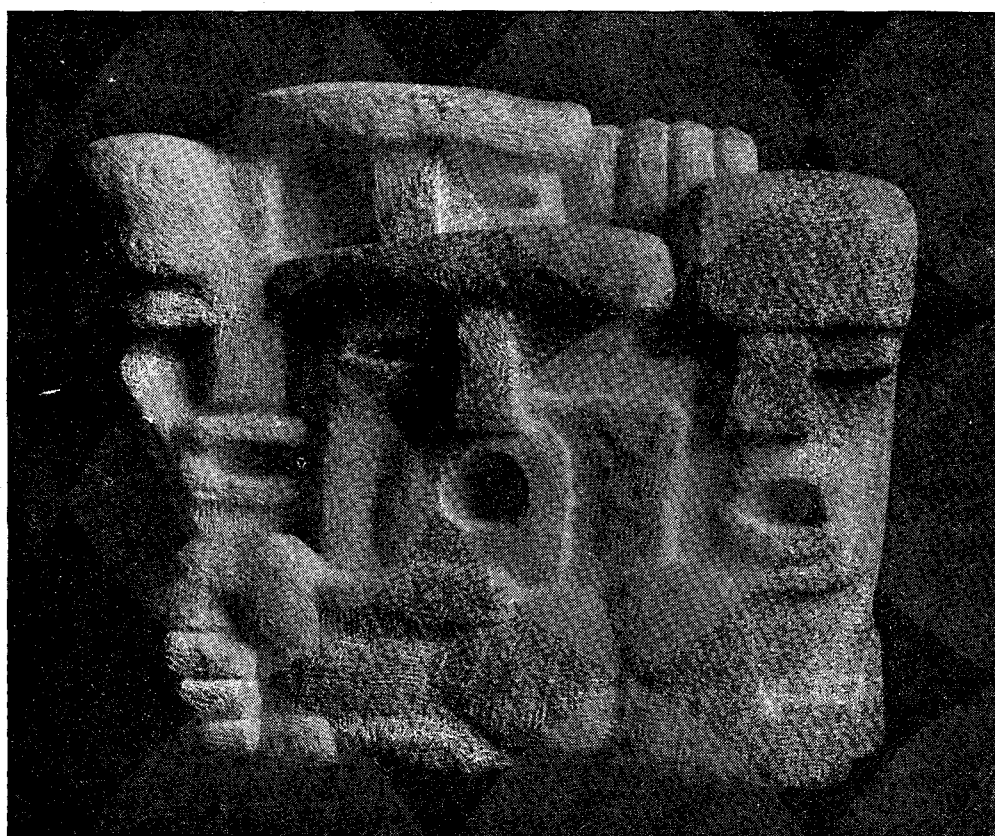
Mr. Scherman's "new approach" has created a storm of excitement in the best circles. Persons as diverse as Bernard M. Baruch and Isabel Paterson have greeted the volume with reams of praise, conspicuous by its understatement: "a miracle of detailed clarification"; "a revolutionary document"; clears up "the universal bases in human nature which govern all economic activity." All of this must be very gratifying to Mr. Scherman, a liberal employer who, like J. David Stern, doesn't mix his progressive ideas with trade unionism in his own business.

No special intelligence is required to grasp this world-shaking principle, which is the key to all economic woes. For Mr. Scherman has discovered that man does not live by bread alone, but by promises. We do not live in a profit system; we live in a *promise system*. Civilization arose because men kept their promises. More than other men, businessmen kept their promises; that was the motive power behind the industrial revolution whose fruits we enjoy today. Business cycles are, after all, only disturbances in the rhythm of promise-making and promise-keeping. Utopia would be achieved when all men kept their promises as well as Wall Street, which, Mr. Scherman maintains, honors its promises almost 100 percent, a record that radicals might well try to emulate.

Unfortunately, we do not think that Mr. Scherman will reach his promised land. He is not the economic prophet who will lead us over the desert of broken promises to that virtuous country where all men are like Mr. Baruch. At best the book is but poor competition for Dale Carnegie and Roger Babson.

Mr. Baruch was really not ribbing the author when he said that "no one, in any walk of life, should allow himself to miss this book." He had in mind the mass distrust of big business, which has steadily increased since Wall Street kept its promises so well in 1929. Mr. Baruch thinks it swell to have Mr. Scherman spread the good news that corporations are honest, that only governments (presumably the Roosevelt Administration) are wicked. This will no doubt gain Mr. Scherman the hearty applause of Messrs. Ford, Girdler, and Rand, who also believe that businessmen keep their promises to workers, and that consequently unions are unnecessary and un-American.

This book illustrates the tragedy of capitalist waste. Such a splendid publishing job, and



Workers' Song

Sculpture by Nat Werner (A. C. A. Gallery)



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after 500 pages it concludes: "Our greatest economic evils might be attributed to a breakdown—now and then, and here and there in this promise system."

FRANK BOWER.

History of the Family

THE FAMILY: PAST AND PRESENT, *edited by Bernhard J. Stern. D. Appleton-Century Co. \$2.75.*

SAMUEL BUTLER once caustically remarked that there were those who were equally displeased at hearing Christianity doubted and at seeing it honored. This trenchant epigram applies with even greater force to the family: especially in the modern period, from the industrial revolution to fascism, have the "rights" of this primal social unit been loudly championed in words and systematically violated in practice.

We may thank the Progressive Education Association for having chosen, as the editor of this source book on the family, a sociologist who is not intimidated by the absurd cult of "detachment," and whose very considerable talents are openly enlisted on the side of democratic ideals. Dr. Bernhard J. Stern has recently—in the winter issue of *Science and Society*, and last year in the government's monumental report on *Technological Trends and National Policy*—analyzed capitalist contradictions as they express themselves in the field of science, invention, and technical developments in general. With the same approach, but utilizing the method of citations from authorities, arranged in an orderly sequence under thirteen main headings, he now presents the question of the family in its ethnic, economic, political, and cultural aspects, from primitive tribal groups in Africa to advanced Socialism in the Soviet Union.

Out of the hundred separate extracts taken from the writings of nearly as many authors it is difficult to make a representative choice. Many of the selections are very short and intended chiefly for background (Aristophanes, Euripides, Erasmus, and Martin Luther, for example); those dealing with primitive society have for the most part an unavoidable academic air—and it is disappointing to find nothing by Lewis Morgan, Robert Briffault, William Graham Sumner, and Sir J. G. Frazer. Only two pages are given to the revolutionary ideas of Marx and Engels, as against ten pages for the current Protestant and Catholic views of the family.

These defects, however, are more than compensated for by the exceptionally full treatment of the American scene, to which six of the thirteen sections are devoted. We see the early American family, hamstrung by puritanism in the North and slavery in the South, struggling to maintain its authority against the disruptive forces of industrialism; Benjamin Franklin's oracular defense of the

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OCCUPATION

"home" contrasts unpleasantly with Arthur Calhoun's picture of the labor of women and children in New England factories, and with Goodsell's account of the wretched conditions in the cities after the Civil War. Commenting on the steady drive toward concentration of ownership and control, Dr. Stern presents half a dozen extracts on the contemporary scene: including material from the Brookings Institute Studies on income and economic progress from the U.S. Department of Labor, and from the recent study on child labor by Lumpkin and Douglas. Everywhere, on farms, in the fields, factories, workshops, and offices of the country, the family is being torn to shreds by the inability of the profit system to guarantee elementary economic and political rights.

Powerful documentary evidence of the breakdown is supplied by extracts from recent novels by Grace Lumpkin, Josephine Herbst, Jack Conroy, and, for the Negro, from Angelo Herndon's *Let Me Live*. The Lynds show us the middle class in Middletown; Isidor Schneider portrays the hardships of the immigrant family in his book, *From the Kingdom of Necessity*; and sections on rural life, on the depression, on health, marriage, and divorce, present evidence, from many private and government sources, to drive home the grim moral that where any class is exploited the whole society is threatened.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Stern's own commentaries in this excellent source book are so slight. It is possible that fewer selections, more fully presented and accompanied by longer interpretative chapters by the editor, would have been more helpful to a greater number of readers. And there is need, in a later edition, for much more comprehensive material on the family under fascism and in contemporary European democracies.

HAROLD WARD.

Brief Reviews

A TIME TO LAUGH, by Rhys Davies. Stackpole Sons. \$2.50.

Dr. Tudor Morris, the hero of this novel, is a middle-class Welsh intellectual whose sympathy with the coal miners of South Wales drives him into open revolt against the operators. He abandons his conventional home, his promising medical practice, and his neurotic fiancée. In allying himself with the workers in their fight for higher wages and better conditions, he discovers a newer and richer meaning in his life. At the conclusion of the novel, the action of which takes place at the turn of the century, Dr. Morris looks forward to the new era with confidence in the victory of the disinherited.

Dr. Morris is over-idealized. The love conflict is dangerously simple: Daisy equals proletariat, Miss Mildred equals bourgeoisie. An almost mystical significance is attached to the connection between the hero's rebelliousness and his grandmother's unorthodox girlhood. But these faults are outweighed by Mr. Davies's real ability as a story teller. His own sympathies are consistently with the miners. He has presented a convincing picture of the misery and degradation of life in the collieries, suggested the stupidity of Victorian class snobbishness in the characters of Dr. Morris's mother and father, and communicated the humor and charm of Welsh folk speech.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Non-Fiction Movies

WHEN Thomas Edison made his first fifty feet of film of May Irwin in a long kiss, he created not only the movie medium but its most lasting subject matter. The American movies have not progressed basically since that day, except in a sort of thyroid development, like a giant which remains an infant organically.

The poverty of the non-fiction film in America is the most distressing by-product of Hollywood's endless love story. Led by the brilliant early work of Eisenstein, Dovchenko (*Ivan*), and Vertov (*Three Songs About Lenin*), Europe has had a steady growth in what John Grierson first tagged the "documentary film," when he was writing of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* in the *New York Sun* in 1922.

The Russians needed the film to build Socialism. *Ivan*, for instance, is the story of a farm youth from the Ukraine who goes off to work on the Dnieprostroy Dam. This unskilled peasant stumbles at his job but learns to become a shock worker—a plot simple enough to encompass the experiences of millions of Soviet workers. Dovchenko, born on the banks of the Dnieper, loves the rich wheat-

lands of the Ukraine, and his film is heavy with the lyric beauty of Ivan's and his own river basin. In pictures like *Ivan* the film took on an unashamed utility; the spectator learned about Socialism in construction, and learned about it with such feeling that the gargantuan dam of the Dnieper became a personal experience, and for the Soviet workers, a responsibility and a promise. In our own crude jargon, *Ivan* helped "sell" electrification to the masses.

These potent developments were quick to inspire film workers in Western Europe. In France, the painter Cavalcanti made in 1926 a strange fuguelike experiment, *Rien Que Les Heures*, the imagist story of twenty-four hours in Paris; but it was the propaganda, the "selling" side of the documentary, which produced the finest films. The German, Ruttman, made, shortly after the advent of sound, a commercial film for the Hamburg-American Line called *Melody of the World*, a celebration of the immense diversity of peoples and culture in the lands reached by the steamship company. Joris Ivens, a former photographic shopkeeper, made a stunning film of coal miners and, later, *New Earth*, the camera story of the taming of the Zuyder Zee. Musical scores were appearing in the fact film, and Hanns Eisler made a sonorous accompaniment for the engineering work on the Zuyder Zee. These new film-makers were coming from everywhere but the movie industry itself, and every new work made technical advances, a growth which could not take place in the entertainment film industry because of the unchanging love theme there. The most important developments of the film, which were later to add luster to the regular industry, were coming from these modest fact pictures. Nowadays Hollywood pictures are turning up with narrated prologues, a new appreciation of nature and buildings and even economics, and the inspiration comes from the documentaries.

John Grierson, the Scot who had been reviewing for the *Sun*, went back to Britain with the ambition to make documentaries. At this time English imperialism was seeking for new marketing techniques, and a group of patriotic industrialists had set up the Empire Marketing Board to propagandize the idea of buying British. Grierson told how useful the film would be, and he was given an office and a salary to work up his idea. The thought of a film to help peddle Empire products fascinated the industrialists, who promptly forgot Grierson in their enthusiasm. One of the members of the Board engaged a pageant master who had had notable success with historical mob scenes at the Wembley Exposition to direct the proposed film, and in a great burst of inspiration Rudyard Kipling was hired to do the script.

The Bard of Imperialism had for his pro-

tagonist a poor urchin who is first seen pressing his nose hungrily against the window of a fine shop on Christmas eve. A kindly peeler asks him what is wrong, and the kid confesses that he'd like to have a Christmas pudding. A righteous glow comes over the cop as he reminds the ungrateful youngster that he is living in the richest Empire on the globe: being English, he indicated, was enough and should suffice. Then the cop stuffs the kid in a mailbox, directed to one of the colonies. The boy is mailed and remailed from one far-flung dominion to the next, in each obtaining one of the ingredients of the English Christmas pudding. Finally he arrives back home on Christmas day with his pudding. And very conscious of his divine privilege.

One can well imagine the cloistered calm, the intimation of nearness of immortality, that came over the Empire Marketing Board when they read this lofty manuscript. Forthwith, equipped with a fancy budget, a great expedition, including everybody but Grierson, started out for the round of colonies.

Meanwhile, Grierson was recovering from his stupor. He went to see a member of the board who was also Scotch, an ardent fisherman. He asked for 5 percent of the outlay of the expedition to indulge a whim of his—the making of a picture about the fishing industry in Scotland. He calculated his countryman correctly and got his money.

With a fanfare the Kipling film finally opened at a leading house and was almost

Recently Recommended Plays

Prologue to Glory (Maxine Elliott, N. Y.).

Federal Theatre production of E. P. Conkle's play about Lincoln's early life, the affair with Ann Rutledge, and his first steps away from the life of the New Salem country store.

Haiti (Lafayette, N. Y.). Rex Ingram plays the lead in this stirring tale of how one of Toussaint L'Overture's generals foiled Napoleon's attempt to restore slavery in Haiti.

One-Third of a Nation (Adelphi, N. Y.).

The current issue of *The Living Newspaper*, headlining the lack of adequate housing for President Roosevelt's 33 1-3 percent, and emphasizing the need for action. Thoroughly documented, witty, and admirably produced.

The Shoemaker's Holiday (National, N. Y.).

Alternating with *Julius Caesar* and produced by the Mercury Theatre, Dekker's play represents with vigor and authority the Elizabethan love of life. A bawdy and lusty comedy that must be seen.

A Doll's House (Broadhurst, N. Y.). A splendid performance of one of Ibsen's best.

Pins and Needles (Labor Stage, N. Y.). A

sprightly social revue, sponsored by the I.L.G.W.U. and staged by Charles Friedman. Hit tunes by Harold Rome and a lively book give the cast something to go to work on. Two companies are soon going on the road.

Recently Recommended Movies

Lenin in October. The reincarnation of Lenin by Boris Shchukin is of magnificent fidelity and regard to detail. Made for the celebration of twenty years of Soviet power. A triumph in theater art.

Generals Without Buttons. A masterful study of child psychology with a vein of anti-war satire running throughout. A French production.

Mad About Music. A musical with Deanna Durbin. The first musical in a year of Tuesdays from which you could drop the music and still have an entertainment.

The Adventures of Chico. An animal picture by the Woodard Brothers of Mexico. Authentic photography; a rare and beautiful picture.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Mark Twain's story of kids on the Mississippi, now in technicolor.

Gold Is Where You Find It. Some healthy analyses of the gold fever of the pioneer West. Has a good documentary introduction showing industrial and agricultural methods in California before the time the story takes place. In technicolor.

Goldwyn Follies. The Ritz brothers and an imposing list of stars join to make this as amusing a variety show as any you've seen.

laughed off the screen. It ran one night. Grierson's little whim is still running in the movie theaters of the Empire. I think this brings up a point to be made about the documentary: Pictures can lie, but it's harder with the documentary.

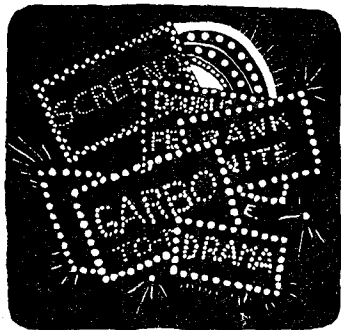
(Another article will discuss the documentary in America.)

THERE'S NO NEED to go to the movies this week. The latest surprise packages from Sodom-in-the-Sun are terrible. *My Man Godfrey* begat *The Baroness and the Butler*; the *Baroness* begat *Merrily We Live*; and *Merrily* begat *Fools for Scandal*, which may still be at the Music Hall if you'll hurry. I've left out several generations, but the in-breeding of these plots of the rich dame in love with her man servant has come to the same pass as the Jukes and the Kallikaks. Carol Lombard, Fernand Gravet, Ralph Belamy, and Mervyn Le Roy are blushing.

Old King Paramount wanted to make a last picture for Gladys Swarthout. He called for her pipes; he called for John Boles; and for one of the Barrymores three. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put this one together again. It's a musical called *Romance in the Dark*—the one in which we were promised the sight of Gladys getting a ripe tomato in the face. The tomato was cut out and John Boles stayed in, causing me to reflect again on the queer judgment of producers.

We may as well face facts about Shirley Temple. The makeup artists can't defeat nature much longer. The horrid bloom of puberty is stealing over the star's chubby cheek: word is being whispered among the wise guys that the end of the trail is near. In *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* the aging duse works hard to evoke memories of the halcyon days when she was in her prime, but she is just a bouncing shadow of her former self. Appropriately enough, the title has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the Kate Douglas Wiggin classic.

Sara Allgood, the Irish Marie Dressler, finds herself in a Scotch village, surrounded by an impenetrable thicket of brogues, in *Storm in a Teacup*, new English picture at the Little Carnegie. Her dog, Patsy, is impounded by the dictatorial Provost of the town. It takes an idealistic journalist to blow up the storm that frees Patsy. The Gaelic Mussolini is treated kindly in this Scotch version of Bruno Frank's German comedy: the



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snake is scotched, not killed. The acting is pretty unsure and the picture is much, much too long. There's satire in it, but it's butter-scotch rather than vitriol.

JAMES DUGAN.

Spring Thaw

SOCIAL changes are frequently preceded by innovations in art. The new forces, the *avant-garde*, seek and find new forms of expression. Thus into the theater of this and recent years has poured a stream of fresh thought, expressed by novel and striking experimentation in technique. Conversely the aging and nearly cast-off drama which still satisfies the few able to pay, struggles to remain comfortably where it has been for so many past and lamented prosperous years. The result of these two trends may be viewed on the current stage, where in the course of last week three plays, two of the past, one standing timidly on the threshold of the future, arrived for the inspection of first nighters and critics.

To *All the Living* go the honors of the week. Cheryl Crawford, who cast her lot with Broadway after so many seasons with the Group Theatre, is the producer and Lee Strasberg the director of a study of lunacy and its treatment in this day and land. Hardie Albright, better known as an actor, adapted the play from a book by Victor S. Small. Mr. Small's thesis is that insanity is a disease which in many cases may be cured by medical treatment. He attacks the established custom of confining the mentally ill in prison cities where they endure a living death.

Mr. Albright's drama poses the problem in the person of a staff doctor who has dared to seek a cure for dementia praecox, but who cannot successfully buck the narrow and apparently unchangeable tradition that the insane are to be humored when they are not neglected. Dr. Kromer has within himself the seeds of repressive instability. The courage of a colleague who defies tradition and actually treats a patient with Kromer's solution of sulphur, saves the doctor from becoming one more "case history."

Lee Strasberg's direction is so vivid, his shadings and transitions from pathos to comedy to tragedy to melodrama so nicely handled, that *All the Living* appears to be a better play than it really is. Furthermore, the cast, carefully chosen by the canny Miss Crawford, lends the play an air of distracted and neurotic latent energy. Sanford Meisner invests the megalomaniacal doctor with sincerity, and there are many other instances of excellent characterization, with Leif Erickson lending intelligence and sound playing to his role as the younger and less disillusioned doctor. Nevertheless, *All the Living* lacks a firm foundation. The author and adapter have concentrated upon the political control of insane asylums, but they have failed to bring out the social causes of insanity. All the living dead of the play are,

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with one exception, shadow people. One cannot really credit them with substance because, so far as the audience is made aware, they have never walked with solid feet upon the earth. In short, the play at the Fulton Theatre says a little something, has its moments of entertainment, and, if you are not too near the borderline of madness yourself, is one of the good things of the season.

Clare Kummer's *Spring Thaw*, in which the luxury of understatement is indulged by the engaging Roland Young, is a gay and trifling little comedy of the early Twenties. The Kummer tricks with the pen twist an old tale into familiar knots: rich man's wife, impecunious and amorous French musician, two maiden sisters-in-law, and all the mild naughtiness which results in husband, wife, and lover winding up in the same bed. I do not believe *Spring Thaw* is any less amusing than any other Kummer farce. At the Martin Beck in 1925, right in the heated midst of Coolidge coolness, it would have been a wow. It is still a well-written illustration of what passes for comedy when you are well-fed, well-dressed, and do not wish to become too wide awake to reality.

Dipping still deeper into the past goes Ethel Barrymore's current vehicle, *Whiteoaks*, with la Barrymore venturing from her own fifties into the grand old age of the grand old great-grandmother of 101 very ripe years. This is another old theatrical trick, performed by most great stars of the bourgeois stage if they live long enough. Henrietta Crosman did it. George Arliss did it. Brother Lionel did it in the movies. And now the quondam glorious Ethel.

The play is derived from Mazo de la Roche's novel about a Canadian family, with roots deep in the past of old England, imperial old England, if you please. Gran Whiteoaks, who lives at Jalna in Ontario with her brood of aged sons and daughters, vigorous grandchildren, and sprightly great-grandchildren, once flirted with a rajah in India. Neither heat nor cold have affected her. She is as sturdy as the imperialism of the 1850's, when she was young.

But this is another age, and the family which fawns upon her in expectation of a legacy is in decay. They drink and ride and in general are parasites—in other words, typically bourgeois of the 1930's. No schemes for the future are theirs; their social task is done. It is a striking commentary on the inner significance of the story that Gran Whiteoaks leaves her fortune to the weak, effeminate, and artistically inclined Finch, played charmingly by Stephen Haggard. It is also worthy of note that the play is essentially a *tour de force*. For interest it depends upon the stage technique of Miss Barrymore, herself one of the last of a long line of stars, who lingers on in this day when the play is the thing, not the players. Shining in the dimming light of her ancient glamor, the Barrymore commands attention. So does Mr. Haggard, who is another of those sensitive young actors of London, who are part and parcel of old England's decay. Hail

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weakness! Hail sensitivity for its own sake! This is the period of mixed emotions, lies, decadence! Incidentally hail Robert Shayne, who gives a forthright performance of the one forthright character of the drama, save for grand old Gran Whiteoaks.

CHARLES E. DEXTER.

Current Music

IN the face of European dispatches and broadcasts, the current round of concerts seems more futile and sterile than ever; only a few bits of significant music-making have more than fiddling while Rome burns. The concert by that true artist and keen mind, Joseph Szigeti (February 23) was the most notable, but honorable mention should go to the welcome to Hanns Eisler at the New School (February 27) and the two programs sponsored by Mailamm (American-Palestine Music Association, February 19 and March 12). Mr. Eisler will be represented again in a F.M.P. Composers-forum-laboratory concert devoted to his works (April 6), and this series deserves another word of praise for its new activities (begun March 29) in giving young students and recently graduated composers an opportunity to hear their works publicly performed. Admirable too is the popular-priced series of the complete Beethoven string quartets being presented by the Budapest Quartet at the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. (five concerts, beginning March 26).

More important than any of these concerts, however, is the little book that has recently appeared, giving the complete text and some of the score of one of the few vital and musical protests against the poisonous trend of the times. I hardly need say that it's Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, and that every reader of this journal should feel it a pleasurable duty to own—and know—it (Random House, \$1.50). It includes piano-vocal scores of six songs: "Croon Spoon," "Honolulu," "Gus and Sadie's Love Song," "Nickel Under the Foot," the title song, and "Joe Worker." I should like to have more, but one can't have everything, and this is an attractive and reasonably-priced book version of one of the greatest and most potent native works of our day.

The New Friends of Music are bright and early in announcing their plans for next season; wisely so, for I imagine many have shared my feeling that the original zest has been lost, and that the Sunday afternoon Town Hall series has simmered down to lukewarm musical interest. I can't see going out of my way to hear Schubert's piano duet works (even if played by the Schnabels) or Schumann's *Liederkreis* (even if it were sung more effectively than by Schorr); and the Mozart presentations as a rule have not been done well enough to atone for the seemingly endless stream of Schubert and Schumann chamber works and songs. But the new plans

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sound as promising and exciting as the original announcements of Mr. Hirschman's organization. A chamber orchestra is being formed, to consist of thirty-six men under the direction of Fritz Stiedry, once of the Vienna Volksoper and Berlin Municipal Opera, for the last four years conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic. Mr. Stiedry will make his first American appearances with the new ensemble in the opening concerts of the 1938-39 season next fall, and his programs are scheduled to include all six Brandenburg Concertos and all four orchestral suites of Bach. Other Bach chamber works and two solo cantatas are promised for next year, and the orchestra will also give six independent concerts. No programs have been announced, but I hope that they will be as catholic as those of the late Philharmonic Symphony Chamber Orchestra (Bennington College Series).

This year's activity of the New Friends has been given quasi-permanent form by the publication of Victor recordings of most of the season's presentations, done as far as possible by the same artists who appeared in Town Hall. A batch of albums and single records have just been given special release. They are properly Mr. Gregg's concern, and I presume they will be reviewed in his column, but I cite them here as exemplifying the present somewhat colorless character of the series (the Schubert-Schnabel and Schumann-Schorr works mentioned above), verging on the incompetently slipshod in the inexcusable perpetration of the upside-down un-Mozartian version of Mozart's Bassoon and 'Cello Sonata by Kohon and Schuster. Fortunately some atonement is made in the Pasquier brothers' performances of a Mozart flute quartet (with René Le Roy) and a Schubert String Trio, and Arthur Fiedler's Sinfonietta in the Mozart Serenade, K. 388, and Diver-timento, K. 287.

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

Modern Age Books. Labor Spy Racket, by Leo Huberman, will be dramatized, Sat., Apr. 2, 9:30 p.m., C.B.S.

Henry G. Teigan. The Minnesota Farmer-Laborite will discuss "The Farmer-Labor Viewpoint of the Present Session of Congress," Sat., Apr. 2, 10:45 p.m., C.B.S.

Wright Patman. The Democrat from Texas will speak on "Local Ownership of Business in Preference to Absentee," Mon., Apr. 4, 7:45 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Herbert Morrison. "British Labor and the European Crisis" will be discussed by the British M.P., Wed., Apr. 6, 7:15 p.m., C.B.S.

Cordell Hull. The Secretary of State will speak on a Pan-American Day program, Thurs., Apr. 7, 10:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Vocational Guidance. The American School of the Air interviews boys at work on new housing projects, Fri., Apr. 8, 2:30 p.m., C.B.S.

"School for Scandal." A presentation of Richard B. Sheridan's play, Sat., Apr. 9, 5 p.m., N.B.C. red.

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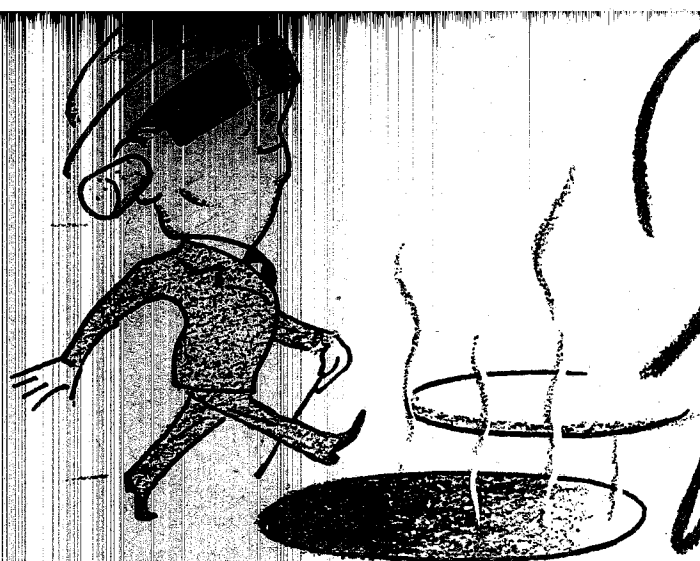
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IF they understood that Isolation is not an escape but one of the surest ways to land the U. S. in the most terrible war of all—would they *still* say *we should shut our eyes and ears and mouth, and let the Fascists overrun the earth?*

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